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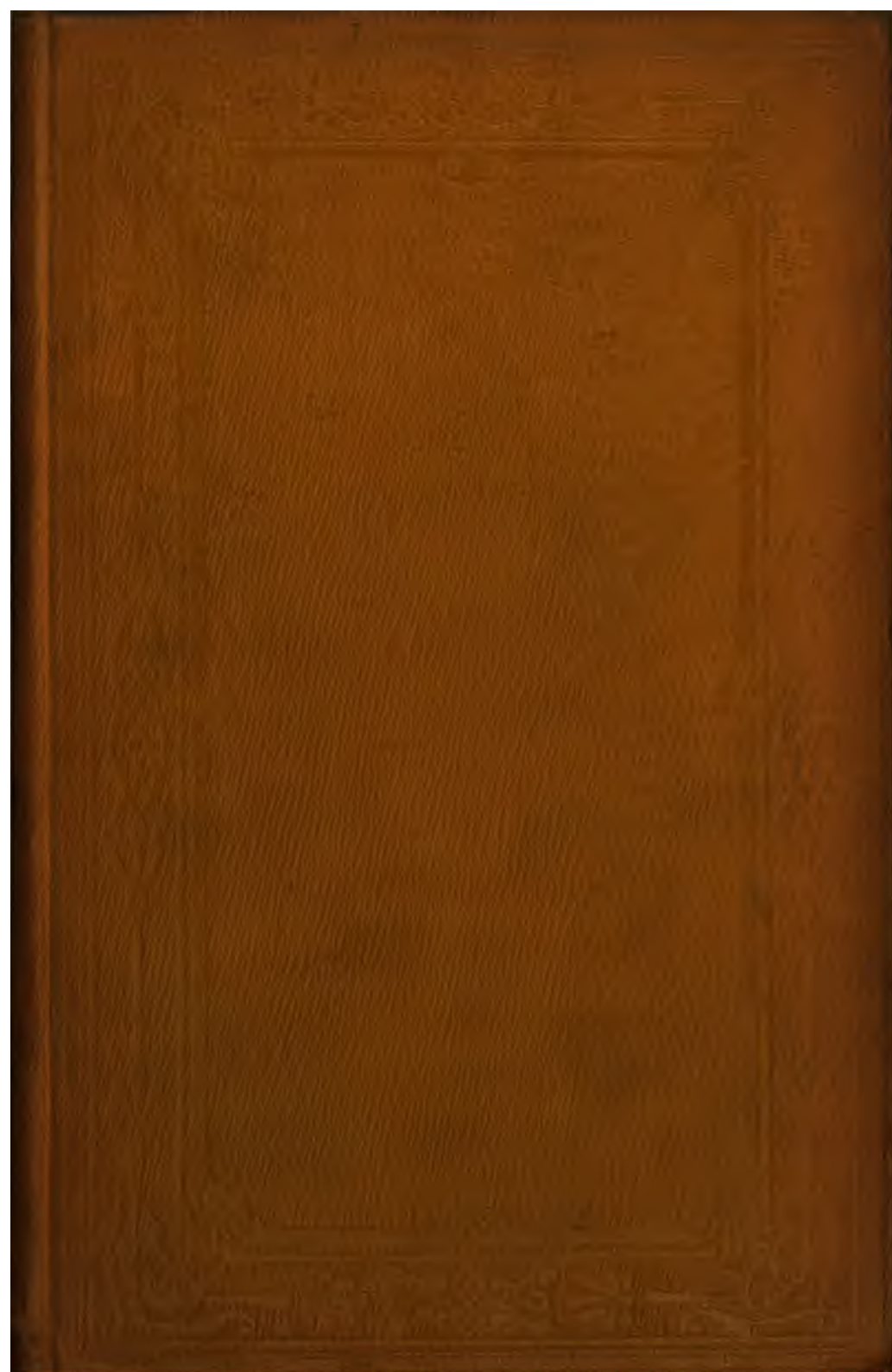
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VOL. III.



LONDON:
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1850.

THE INITIALS.

CHAPTER I.

A BALL AT THE MUSEUM CLUB.

"I HOPE we shall have no visitors," said Crescenz the next day, after having examined herself for some time attentively in the glass which was between the windows in the drawing-room. "I hope we shall have no visitors, for these curl-papers are certainly not becoming. If Mamma had allowed, I should have passed the day in my own room, that nobody might see them. "Don't you think me very ugly to-day?" she added, turning to Hamilton, who, as usual, was close to the stove.

"You are not ugly, but the curl-papers are," he answered, looking at her over his book.

"But we shall look so well with long curls in

the evening," she said, half appealing to her sister, who was standing at the window with some intricate piece of work. "What a pity one cannot have curls without curl-papers!"

"They are dearly bought, if you are obliged to have your hair twisted up in that manner all day," said Hamilton.

"I thought Englishwomen very often had long curls."

"So they have—but they never appear in a drawing-room with curl-papers."

"They certainly are very unbecoming," said Crescenz, again inspecting herself in the glass. "I have a great mind to arrange my braids again. After all, my hair will perhaps fall out of curl during the first waltz. You know, Hildegarde, at the examinations I was obliged to fasten up the curls with a comb?"

"Yes, but I remember the curls became you extremely——"

"Hildegarde," whispered Crescenz, coming close to her sister, "You know Mr. Hamilton cannot go to the ball, and if he thinks the curl-papers so very ugly——"

"I should think Major Stultz's opinion of more consequence to you," answered Hildegarde; "and," she added loud enough to be heard, "you know if Mr. Hamilton dislike so much seeing

curl-papers, he has only to avoid looking at us for the remainder of the day."

Hamilton closed his book, looked out of the window at the thickly falling snow, and then left the room. Crescenz immediately exclaimed, "Oh, Hildegarde, you have offended him! How can you be so unkind?"

"Is it unkind to tell him not to look at us for a few hours!" Hildegarde asked, laughing.

"You are so unnecessarily rude to him sometimes — yesterday evening, for instance, you scarcely answered him, when he spoke to you."

"Because I was occupied with my father. I hope you have no objection to my preferring his conversation to Mr. Hamilton's!"

"But you were only talking about the opera to Papa, who would have been very glad if you had allowed him to hear what Mr. Hamilton was telling Lina Berger about a pic-nic party on the Thames. Lina says he is the most fascinating young man she ever met, not even excepting Theodore Biedermann!"

"And Mr. Hamilton will tell you if you ask him, that Madame Berger is the most fascinating young woman he ever met, not even excepting Crescenz Rosenberg."

"Oh, dear; I forgot to tell you that Major Stultz was quite mistaken. Lina explained every-

thing before she left yesterday evening. Mr. Hamilton only went to hear her play waltzes !”

Hildegarde shook her head incredulously.

“ You do not believe her ?”

“ No.”

“ Well, I do ; and I will manage to find out from Mr. Hamilton the whole truth.”

“ Don’t attempt any thing of the kind, Crescenz ; you will only make yourself ridiculous.”

“ We shall see,” said Crescenz, nodding her head as she left the room.

When she returned to the drawing-room her hair was braided in the usual manner ; and she rather unwillingly confessed that she had seen Hamilton, who had said that he thought braids infinitely more becoming than curls for young and pretty persons !”

“ I greatly fear Mr. Hamilton is beginning to amuse himself again at your expense,” observed Hildegarde, with some irritation.

“ He did not seem to be amusing himself ; he spoke quite gravely, and Papa, who was present, agreed with him.”

Hildegarde’s hands rose to her head, and her fingers impatiently contracted themselves round the offending curl-papers. “ If I had known that Papa thought so I should never have curled my hair, but now it is too late ; Mr.

Hamilton will think I have tried to please him, and——”

“Oh dear, no,” cried Crescenz; “he did not seem in the least to think I had braided my hair to please him. He was talking to Papa about religion and philosophy, and some acquaintances of the name of Hegel and Schelling.”

Hildegarde smiled. “If they were talking of Hegel and Schelling, I dare say he has forgotten us and our curls. I could not possibly think of sacrificing my ringlets to please *him*, and Papa I shall probably not see until evening.”

Hamilton took her advice more literally than she just then wished: he remained in his room the rest of the day, and thus avoided seeing her again. She felt that a few words spoken in a moment of irritation had deprived her of all chance of seeing him alone for a few minutes in order to induce him to avoid her cousin, and go the ensuing week to the Z.’s; but she consoled herself by thinking, that at least, they were not likely to meet during that evening, as Raimund had not been invited to the ball at court, and was to accompany his betrothed to the museum.

As soon as it was dusk, the sisters disappeared. Madame Rosenberg in vain sent to request they would come to supper. They were not hungry. They could not eat. “Quite natural!” observed

their father, helping himself to some salmi and cold turkey. "Quite natural! Who ever heard of a girl eating before she went to her first ball? I suppose, however, they will soon be dressed, so I think, Babette, you might now put on your brown silk dress and pink turban; it would be a pity if they were to lose a dance! Mr. Hamilton has offered to leave us at the museum, on his way to the palace."

Madame Rosenberg poured out a glass of beer, drank it quickly, and left the room. A few minutes afterwards, Hildegard and her sister entered, in all the charms of youth and white muslin. "Is she not beautiful?" exclaimed Crescenz, for a moment forgetting herself in her admiration of her sister. "Is she not beautiful? Ah, I knew you would admire curls," she added as a sort of reply to Hamilton's look of most genuine admiration. "Curls are prettier than braids after all!" She drew her hand, as she spoke, over her smooth shining hair, and glanced regretfully towards the looking glass.

Hildegard turned from Hamilton with a slightly conscious blush. Never had he seen or imagined any one so lovely, as she appeared to him at that moment. The long waving ringlets of her rich brown hair, relieved the slightly severe expression of her almost too regular features,

while her beautifully formed figure, seen to advantage in her light ball dress, attracted equally by its roundness and delicacy. Had Hamilton seen her for the first time that evening, he would have been captivated. When we, however, remember that she had been for months the object of his first love; that he had resided in the same house, and had had opportunities of knowing and judging her by no means commonplace ideas, as they had studied together, and that he was at a time of life when the feelings are most impetuous, we may form some idea of the emotion which, for some minutes, deprived him of the power of utterance. Hildegarde was so perfectly independent in thought and action; she required so little of that protection which her sex usually seek, that, had she not been eminently handsome, she would probably have found more people disposed to admire her character, than love her person. Men especially do not often bestow affection on such women; but, when they do, it is with a degree of passion which they seldom or never feel for the more gentle, and weaker of the sex. And so—irresistibly attracted by her beauty, and perhaps hoping to find feelings as strong as her mind, three men now loved her with characteristic fervour: her cousin, with an intensity bordering on insanity, Zedwitz, with the glowing steadiness of

his disposition and years, and Hamilton, with all the ardour of extreme youth.

"I thought Hildegarde would have worn one of my bracelets this evening," said Crescenz; "I offered her the choice of them all!"

"That was very kind of you, Crescenz," said her father, "but Hildegarde does not care for ornaments of that kind."

"But look at that ugly little hair bracelet, which she insists upon wearing," said Crescenz, laughing. "If she had bracelets of her own, she would wear them I am sure. Every one must like bracelets!"

Mr. Rosenberg took Hildegarde's hand, and raised her passive arm towards his eyes, in order to inspect the bracelet. "It is not ugly, nor ill chosen either," he observed, smiling; "a black bracelet makes an arm look fairer still; but I own I did not think my treasure studied such things!"

Hildegarde, with a look of annoyance, hastily unclasped the bracelet, and threw it into her work-basket.

"Don't be offended, Hildegarde. Every woman should endeavour to improve her appearance as much as possible. Your arm is round and white, and the bracelet pretty; it ought, perhaps, to have been a little broader, but the horse-hair

was scarce, it seems! However, you can wear it very creditably: at a little distance, people will think it the hair of some very dear friend!"

Madame Rosenberg made her appearance at this moment, in a state of ludicrous distress; she had tried to force her large hands into a pair of small French gloves. One, from its elasticity, had been drawn somewhat over the half of one hand, leaving the other half and the wrist quite bare; but the other had burst asunder across the palm, and she now held it towards her husband, with a look of mock despair.

"Try another, and a larger pair," he said, laughing.

"I have not another pair in the house. You know I never want white gloves, and I was obliged to send to Schultz for these, after I had begun to dress!"

"Oh, I can mend it in a moment," cried Crescenz, bringing a needle and thread, "only keep it on your hand—it will never do if you pull it off again."

Hamilton had in the meantime been playing with the discarded bracelet—Hildegard attempted to take it out of his hand, but he held it nearer the light, observing in a low voice, "This is not *horse-hair*. It cannot be your father's or your

sister's, for they have brown hair; nor your cousin's; nor——"

"Give me my bracelet," said Hildegarde, impatiently. He held it towards her with both hands, and a look of pretended alarm. She half smiled, and extended her arm, while with a degree of trepidation which he in vain endeavoured to overcome, he placed the tongue in the serpent's head which formed the clasp. When he looked up her head was averted, and she was jesting with her father about her chance of finding partners or being left sitting.

"Pray keep one waltz or galoppe in reserve for me," said Hamilton. "I shall be at the museum between ten and eleven o'clock."

Hildegarde murmured a sort of assent, but the expression of her countenance denoted any thing but satisfaction. She became grave and thoughtful. It was impossible not to perceive the change, and with ill-concealed mortification, Hamilton turned to her father, "Your daughter does not know, perhaps, that I have learned to waltz since I came here. I am no longer a bad dancer."

"Oh, dear! I always thought you danced extremely well," said Crescenz.

"I may depend upon your keeping a waltz free for me; if Major Stultz will permit it."

"Oh, yes; that is," said Crescenz, correcting

herself, "if you can remember your engagement with me when Lina Berger is present."

"Madame Berger has no influence whatever upon my memory."

"No, but upon your heart."

"None whatever. She is very pretty, very amusing, very flattering, everything you please but loveable."

"Well, if she only heard you say that," began Crescenz.

"The carriage has been at the door this long time," cried Madame Rosenberg, tying a large handkerchief over her ears and pink turban. "Let us be off."

Crescenz touched her sister's hand, and whispered, "You see, dear, I was right."

Hildegarde bent her head, but did not speak.

Hamilton heard, saw, but only partly understood. Had Hildegarde been jealous?

The ball at court was not in the least less brilliant than any of the preceding, but Hamilton was not disposed to admire the rooms, or the fresco paintings, or the candelabra, or even his own form in the long glass, placed so conveniently at the door of one of the reception rooms. Figures in blue and pink crape passed and repassed him scarcely observed, so completely had a form in white, with a wreath of roses in her hair, taken

possession of his imagination. His abstraction attracted even the notice of royalty, and it was with a deep blush that Hamilton stammered some excuse when asked why he did not dance as usual.

At ten o'clock he withdrew, bounded down the stairs which he had thought so tiresome to mount a couple of hours before, found his carriage waiting, and drove to the museum. The contrast was great, but he heeded it not, Hildegard was everything to him. He glanced quickly round the room, and immediately discovered the object of his search walking composedly towards the dancers with a tall officer in the guards; he was about to leave the room again in a fit of uncontrollable irritation when he remembered his engagement with Crescenz. The moment she saw him, she spoke a few words eagerly to Major Stultz, smiled, and then walked a step or two towards him. "I knew you would come," she said with evident pleasure, and shewing her little ball book; "see, you were written for two dances that I might be quite sure of being disengaged."

"Thank you," said Hamilton, "you are very kind. I can remain but one hour, and as your sister seems to have forgotten her engagement with me, perhaps you will give me the second waltz also?"

"Oh, I dare not; Major Stultz will never con-

sent. I am sure I wish he would go home, he is so sleepy already. But," she added, after a pause, "I am quite sure that Hildegarde will dance with you."

In the course of the dance, Hildegarde and her partner came close beside them. Hamilton at first pretended not to observe it, but Crescenz naturally spoke to her sister.

"Mr. Hamilton fancies you will not dance with him, but I am sure he is mistaken; he says he cannot remain more than an hour, so you must promise him the next waltz or galoppe, whichever it may be."

"If he really wish it," said Hildegarde, "but he looks so very seriously English to-night, that if I were to propose dancing with him, I am sure he would say no!"

"Try me," said Hamilton; "or rather write my name in your book, that I may be sure you are in earnest."

"You must trust to my memory, for I have neither ball book nor tablets. I have no one," she added, looking archly towards her sister, "I have no one to supply me with ball books and bouquets," and she bent her head over her sister's hand, which could scarcely clasp the geraniums, heliotropes, and China roses, with which it was filled.

A moment after, she had joined the dancers, and Hamilton stood thoughtfully beside his partner.

"Do you not admire my bouquet?" she asked, holding it coquettishly towards him.

"Exceedingly; for the time of year it is beautiful."

"Major Stultz waited at the door to give it to me. It was an attention I never expected from him."

"Why not?" asked Hamilton, absently.

"Oh, because he was so many years a soldier and in the wars, and in Russia, and all that. I thought it was only young—a—a—persons with whom one danced—who gave bouquets."

"Very true," said Hamilton, laughing, "and it is disgracefully negligent of young—a—persons to forget such things sometimes."

"I assure you," stammered Crescenz, "I did not mean—I did not think——"

"I know you did not," said Hamilton.

"He knows you *never* think, my dear," said Madame Berger, who had overheard the last words when taking the place behind them.

"She never thinks or says anything unkind," said Hamilton, warmly.

Madame Berger looked up saucily, and then turned to her partner, a gay student, to listen to some nonsense about her long blonde ringlets.

"Lina is angry that you have not asked her to dance," said Crescenz, as she returned to join her mother. "Suppose you were to waltz with her next time; I know Hildegarde will not be in the least offended."

Hamilton shook his head. "I am not so much afraid of giving offence as you are; besides you may be mistaken."

"No," said Crescenz, "I am sure I am right, for I remember her saying she would keep a waltz for you, and you said you could not come at all. Oh, I remember it, for I was so sorry when you said so, that I did not care at all for the ball, or my new dress, or——"

Hamilton unconsciously pressed Crescenz' hand, her heightened colour immediately reprimanded him for his imprudence, and he turned to Madame Rosenberg, and asked her how she liked playing chaperone?

"Better a great deal than I expected," she answered, laughing; and then lowering her voice she added, "our girls are certainly very pretty; you have no idea how civil all the men are to me on their account. Franz is enjoying a sort of triumph to-night, but the Major is not quite satisfied; he says the young officers have been talking nonsense to Crescenz, for she has been blushing every moment. Now I have told him a hundred times

it is from the heat of the room and the exertion of dancing. It would be better if he would go down to the club-room and smoke his pipe; he cannot expect the child to sit beside him all the evening as she does at home. She has very properly done her duty, and already danced twice with him, and more he cannot require. He has no sort of tact, the Major. Fancy his wanting her to fix her wedding-day just now, when she is thinking of anything in the world but her marriage. I never knew anything so injudicious."

Poor Crescenz had been condemned to a place between her mother and Major Stultz. Hildegard had emancipated herself completely; she hung on her proud father's arm, walked about the rooms, and talked unrestrainedly. Hamilton had to seek her when the music again commenced; she left her father directly, and walked towards the dancing room, but scarcely had she entered it when Count Raimund approached, exclaiming, "Where are you going, Hildegard? do not forget that this galloppe is mine."

"No, Oscar, it was the second that I promised you."

"That cannot be, Hildegard, for I am engaged to dance it with a—Marie. I believe—I am quite certain—you promised me this one."

"And I am *quite sure*, Oscar, that you are mis-

taken. *Quite sure!*" began Hildegarde, with her usual decision of manner, but the angry expression of her cousin's countenance made her hesitate. "Perhaps, however," she added, looking from one to the other, "perhaps as Mr. Hamilton is an Englishman, and does not care about dancing, he will be rather pleased than otherwise in being released from what he probably considered a duty dance."

"By no means," said Hamilton, firmly holding the hand which she endeavoured to withdraw, "I am not so indifferent as you seem to imagine. You have promised to dance with me, and I am not disposed to release you from your engagement."

"Nor I either," said Count Raimund, while the blood mounted to his temples, and was even visible under the roots of his fair hair.

"You think perhaps I ought to feel flattered," said Hildegarde, scornfully, "but I do not—on the contrary I think you both, I mean to say—Oscar extremely disagreeable. I shall not dance with either of you," she added, seating herself on a bench, and beginning to tap her foot impatiently on the floor. The two young men placed themselves on either side of her.

"I hope she said, turning to Count Raimund, "I hope you are satisfied, now that you have de-

prived me of the pleasure of dancing a galoppe, to which I have been looking forward for the last half hour?"

"My satisfaction depends entirely on who the person may be, with whom you anticipated so much pleasure in dancing."

"You know perfectly well that I was not engaged to you, and did not think of you."

Count Raimund played with the hilt of his sword, which he had laid on the form beside him.

"Oscar," continued Hildegard, after a pause in a low voice, "don't be so unjust, so tyrannical as to deprive me of my galoppe. Choose somebody else. See there is Marie still disengaged—go quickly before any one else can ——"

"Thank you," said Raimund, interrupting her, "You are very kind, but I have no inclination whatever that way. Marie may be very good for household purposes, but I must say I rejoice in the idea that our marriage will free me from these ball-room duties towards a person I have scarcely learned to tolerate. In fact, I believe I detest her, so has she been forced upon me!"

"Oscar, Oscar—take care. Do not speak so loud. What would people think of you, were you to be heard? Some one may tell Marie, and make her repent her disinterested conduct towards

you—she does not deserve to be made unhappy, especially by you!”

“What did you say, sir?” cried Raimund, speaking angrily, across Hildegarde, to Hamilton.

“I have not had time to say anything,” he replied, laughing.

“But you looked as if you agreed with my cousin?”

“My looks are expressive, it seems,” said Hamilton, coolly.

“Perhaps you intend to inform my betrothed of what I have just now said,” cried Raimund, still more angrily.

“My acquaintance with her is of too recent date to admit of my doing so.”

“Do you mean deliberately to insult me?” asked Raimund, in a voice of suppressed rage.

“No, Oscar,” cried Hildegarde, laying her hand hastily on his arm, “It is you who are endeavouring to commence a quarrel with Mr. Hamilton. You feel that you are in the wrong, and that you ought not to have made such a remark in public of a person to whom you are to be married in less than a week.”

“You may say what you please to me, Hildegarde, but neither Mr. Hamilton nor any one else shall dare by word or look to imply ——”

Hamilton turned away with a smile of unequivocal contempt.

"What do you mean, sir?" cried Raimund, starting from his seat, and facing him while he folded his arms.

"I mean that this is no place for such words—still less for such gestures," replied Hamilton, glancing round him. The loudness of the music, however, had prevented them from being heard.

"Oscar," cried Hildegard, vehemently, "sit down beside me. Listen to me—you *must* listen to me. You are altogether in the wrong—you are rude and irritating, and ought to be ashamed of yourself. Do not try Mr. Hamilton's patience further."

"I have no intention of doing so," said Raimund, biting his lip, and frowning fearfully.

Hildegard looked anxiously, first at her cousin and then at Hamilton, to whom she said in a low voice, "I do not know which is most to be feared, your coolness—or Oscar's ungovernable temper? But this I have determined, that neither shall stir from this place until a reconciliation has taken place. You, Oscar are bound to apologise for your unprovoked rudeness, and ——"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Raimund. "You are a most excellent mediatrix, my charming cousin, but believe me, explanations are better avoided—— See, we have already forgotten the whole affair."

Hildegard looked uneasily towards Hamilton,

he appeared to be intently watching the dancers as they flew past him.

"It is useless your trying to deceive me," she began, once more turning to Raimund, but he immediately interrupted her by saying, "Pray is all this unnecessary anxiety on my account, or—on his?"

"My anxiety is divided. Surely," she continued, almost in a whisper, "you will not be so foolish as to commence a quarrel in this unreasonable manner? What will Marie and her mother think, should they hear of it? What right had you to ask for an explanation of Mr. Hamilton's looks? You are seeking a quarrel, and do you think by acting in this manner you are likely to increase my regard for you! Oh Oscar! have you forgotten what you said about a double crime"—The music played loudly, and Hildegarde bent towards her cousin, and continued to speak for some time. Raimund's countenance cleared by degrees, he raised his eyes to her face with an expression of undisguised admiration and love, and then whispered an answer, which made her blush and turn away.

"You know your influence with me is unbounded. On this condition I will do or say whatever you please," he added, endeavouring to catch her eye.

"It is ungenerous of you to take advantage of my fears," said Hildegarde, rising.

Hamilton asked her if she wished to return to her father; she seemed scarcely to hear him, appearing lost in thought for some moments. She again consulted the countenances of her two companions, again became anxious, and finally turning to Raimund said, with some embarrassment, "After all, it is not worth talking so much about—I accept the condition — perform your promise."

"Time and place to be chosen by me?" said Raimund, loudly and eagerly.

"Do not make any more conditions," cried Hildegarde, impatiently, "but perform your promise at once."

"This must be understood," said Raimund, "or else ——"

Hamilton felt himself growing very angry, he turned to leave them, when Count Raimund called him back, "Mr. Hamilton, a moment if you please. Hildegarde has convinced me that I have been altogether in the wrong just now. If I have offended you, I am sorry for it, I hope you do not expect me to say more!"

"I did not expect you to say so much," replied Hamilton, coldly.

A sudden flush once more overspread Raimund's

face, an internal struggle seemed to take place, but after a glance towards Hildegarde, he said calmly, "If I did not feel that I had been the aggressor, not even the offered bribe, could have induced me to apologise."

"Bribe—offered!" exclaimed Hildegarde, almost indignantly.

"No, not offered. Favour conceded if you like it better—we will not dispute about words. Mr. Hamilton, my cousin is free, and can dance when she pleases."

"I imagine she could have done so before, had she wished it," said Hamilton, haughtily.

Raimund walked away as if he had not heard him, and buckled on his sword, with an air of perfect satisfaction.

Hamilton stood by Hildegarde as if he were turned to stone. The words, which had been so mysteriously spoken, seemed to have completely petrified him. Hildegarde, too, stood immovable for a minute, and then turned as if to leave him.

"Do you not wish to dance?" asked Hamilton in a constrained voice.

"No—I mean yes—yes, of course," she replied, moving mechanically towards the dancers.

Hamilton's feelings at this moment would be difficult to define. As he put his arm round her slight figure, intense hatred was perhaps for the

instant predominant—he was in such a state of angry excitement, that he had gone quite round the room before he perceived that he was actually carrying Hildegarde, who was entreating him to stop.

“Get me a glass of water,” she said, moving unsteadily towards the refreshment room, and sinking on a chair behind the door. She had become deadly pale, and was evidently suffering, but seemed determined to conquer the unusual weakness, which threatened to overcome her.

When Hamilton again stood beside her, he no longer felt angry; bending towards her he whispered, “If you repent any hasty promise which you may have made to your cousin, I shall be happy to be the bearer of any message or explanation.”

“Repent!” murmured Hildegarde, “No; I have promised, and I don’t repent: but you—you must not speak any more this evening to Oscar; he has apologised for his rudeness, and I know you are too generous ever to refer to the subject again.”

“But he spoke of some bribe—some favour,” began Hamilton.

“That is my affair and not yours,” replied Hildegarde, rising as the dancers began to pour into the room. “And now take me to my father.

After all," she added, forcing a smile, "I believe I have wasted a great deal of genuine alarm on a pair of very worthless young men!"

"So it was not repentance about this promised favour, but anxiety about us, which has nearly caused you to faint?"

"Just so — my fears perhaps magnified the danger—but there was danger, more than you were aware of. Avoid my cousin," she added, earnestly, "he is reckless now, but I trust better times are in store for him." Though still fearfully pale, she walked steadily towards the end of the room, where her father and mother were standing.

Raimund saw Hamilton leaving the room a few minutes afterwards, with hasty steps, and a disturbed countenance. He looked after him, and observed with a sarcastic smile to an acquaintance who was near him, "I have spoiled that Englishman's supper, he is not likely to enjoy his *pâté de foie gras* or champagne under the orange-trees at court to-night!"

CHAPTER II.

A DAY OF FREEDOM.

SOME days passed over remarkably tranquilly. Crescenz' marriage was to take place in a fortnight, and she and Hildegarde had promised to be bridesmaids to Marie de Hoffmann, the beginning of the ensuing week. Hildegarde made no further effort to warn Hamilton about her cousin—perhaps she now deemed it unnecessary, as the young men openly showed their mutual antipathy, and avoided even the most formal intercourse.

One fine afternoon, when Hamilton was about to drive out in his sledge, he perceived Crescenz hovering about him mysteriously. Major Stultz, who was in the room, seemed to embarrass her,

but at length she murmured in French, "I have something to say to you."

"I have been aware of it for the last half hour, and have remained here on purpose to hear it," said Hamilton.

"You always forget that Mr. Hamilton speaks German perfectly well, Crescenz," observed Major Stultz. "I take it for granted you have no secret from me!"

"Oh, dear no," said Crescenz, with a slight laugh, "I always speak French when I am not thinking of anything particular. You know for many years I never spoke any other language;" and while she spoke, she carelessly upset her work-basket, the contents of which rolled in all directions on the painted floor.

"Dear me! How awkward I am!" she exclaimed, half laughing, while Major Stultz, with evident difficulty, began to pick up the dispersed articles. "My scarlet wool is behind the sofa, Mr. Hamilton, will you be so kind ——"

Hamilton moved the sofa. There was no scarlet wool, but a slip of paper dropped from Crescenz' hand, he immediately took possession of it, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure. "Thank you, thank you, I believe I have everything now. Oh, by the bye, Mr. Hamilton, if you have time, I wish you would call on Lina Berger, and ask

her why she has not been here since the ball?"

Hamilton hesitated.

"Tell her my wedding-day is fixed, and I want to consult her about my veil. You will go to her, I hope?"

"If—you—wish it—but——"

"No buts, I hate buts," said Crescenz, laughing, and then making an inexplicable grimace to him apart.

When out of the room, he inspected the slip of paper, on which was written in French,

"You have offended Lina Berger by not dancing with her. Make up your quarrel as fast as you can, or we shall lose all chance of going to the masquerade."

"I had forgotten all about the masquerade," thought Hamilton, "and must make my peace directly with the little person. She shall drive out with me this very day to arrange matters. Fortunately she has said at least half a dozen times that she likes sledging—I ought to have taken the hint long ago ——"

What his excuses were is not recorded—they did not seem to interest him particularly, as only the result is known. Madame Berger drove out in his sledge, the party was arranged, and the next morning, at breakfast, a note was brought to

Madame Rosenberg, offering Doctor Berger's carriage and horses for the day of the masquerade.

"How goodnatured of Lina to remember that I wished to see my father and introduce the Major to him," she exclaimed, handing the neatly-written note to her husband; "I would rather it had been any other day than Monday, as you know Mademoiselle de Hoffmann's marriage is to take place on Tuesday, and it will be disagreeable returning home so early the next day, however, that cannot be avoided."

"Easily enough, I should think," observed Mr. Rosenberg, quietly, "Mr. Hamilton has often proposed lending us his horses, and all days are alike to him, I know."

Before Hamilton could answer, Madame Rosenberg exclaimed, "His horses? Not for any consideration in the world! Besides, his sledge is only for two persons and a servant, and I wish to take the boys and the Major with us."

"In that case, I think we had better take a job carriage for a day and a half."

"No use in paying for what we can have for nothing," said Madame Rosenberg; "so, if you have no objection, I shall accept the offer."

"As you please," said her husband, "a visit to the Iron Works is not exactly what I enjoy most in the world."

"Crescenz," said Madame Rosenberg, taking no notice of this remark, "Crescenz, just put on your bonnet, and slip over to old Madame Lustig's; ask her if she can take charge of you and Hildegarde on Monday, but she must spend the whole day here, and promise to sleep in the nursery."

Crescenz left the room, not without slightly glancing towards Hamilton, and primly pressing her lips together to repress a smile.

"I don't like Madame Lustig," said Hildegarde, abruptly.

"Why?" asked Hamilton.

"Because she so evidently tries to please everybody."

"Better than evidently trying to please no one," said her mother, sharply. "However, whether you like her or not, if she take charge of you and Crescenz on Monday, I expect you will do whatever she desires, and consider her as in my place."

Hildegarde looked up, as if about to remonstrate, caught her father's eyes, and then bent over her coffee-cup without speaking.

Madame Lustig made no difficulties and many promises. She arrived the next morning, when they were all breakfasting together at an unusually early hour, listened patiently to Madame Rosen-

berg's directions about locking the house-door, and fastening the windows, and examining the stoves, and then accompanied them to the carriage with Hamilton, Hildegarde, and Crescenz. Major Stultz seemed very much inclined to remain behind, but Crescenz whispered rather loudly, "that Mamma had been so kind about her trousseau, that he ought to visit Grandpapa!"

"What an artful little animal it is after all!" thought Hamilton, "and how different from ——" he looked towards Hildegarde, who, all unconscious of their plans, after having twisted a black silk scarf round her father's neck, stood rubbing her hands, and slightly shivering in the cold morning air.

"Adieu, adieu," was repeated in every possible tone, while the carriage drove off. A moment afterwards, Crescenz was scampering up the stairs, dragging Madame Lustig after her, and when Hamilton and Hildegarde, who followed more leisurely, reached the door, they were obliged to remain there, for Crescenz, dancing a gallop with Madame Lustig, was now forcing her backwards the whole length of the passage at a tremendous pace, the jolly old woman keeping the step, and springing with all her might, for fear of falling. Hamilton and Hildegarde looked on, laughing.

At length they stopped for want of breath. "Well—what—shall we—do first?" said Crescenz, twisting up her hair, which had fallen on her shoulders.

"Do—!" panted Madame Lustig, as she leaned against the wall. "You have nearly—killed me—this is not the way to make me able to go to the masqu——"

In a moment, Crescenz' apron was over her head, and a new struggle began.

"I asked you what we should do first?" cried Crescenz, laughing, "suppose—suppose we make ice cream? Mamma has left me the keys, and allowed me to take whatever I like from the store room. You have a good receipt I am sure, let us make the cream, and Mr. Hamilton and Hildegard can turn it round in the ice pail!"

"Shall we not first arrange with Walburg about dinner?"

"Oh, dinner! how very disagreeable to be obliged to eat dinner! cannot we (for once, just by way of a joke,)" she said coaxingly, "have something instead of dinner?"

"Soup, boiled beef, and steam noodles are, however, not to be despised; and that is what your mother ordered," said Madame Lustig, "besides, on Mr. Hamilton's account, you ought ——"

"Oh, I have no objection to dining on ice cream," said Hamilton, laughing.

"You see!" cried Crescenz, "Mr. Hamilton is so—so——. You see he will do whatever we wish. Let us make some cakes out of the cookery book, and then we can all be merry together in the kitchen!"

A sort of compromise was made. The soup and boiled beef was allowed, but the ice cream, and several kinds of cakes were to be forthwith fabricated. Madame Lustig was, like most Germans in her station in life, an excellent cook, she was also a good humoured, thoughtless person, and soon became quite as unrestrained as her young companions. Her cap and false curls were laid aside, her sleeves tucked up, a capacious white apron bound over her black silk dress, and she was immediately employed in beating up eggs, and pounding sugar. Hamilton amused himself singing aloud the cookery book in recitative, until, in the course of time, he was duly established with Hildegard, near a window in the corridor, a large bucket of ice between them, in which was placed the pail containing the cream. They turned it round alternately, and Crescenz occasionally inspected the process, dancing with delight as it began to freeze.

"Oh, dear! how nice! I hope it will not melt

before Lina Berger comes. Is this window cool enough?"

"Cool!" said Hildegarde, laughing, "try it for a few minutes, and you will say cold, I think."

"Could not you spare Mr. Hamilton for a little while, Hildegarde? We want him to pound sugar; our arms positively ache, and Walburg is not yet come back from market."

Hildegarde made no objection, and Hamilton was conducted back to the kitchen, from whence, immediately, repeated bursts of laughter issued.

The arrival of Madame Berger seemed to increase the noise, she closed the kitchen door, but Hildegarde distinctly heard the words—"congratulate—freedom for one day at least—make good use—amusement—Hildegarde—hush." A short whispering ensued, and at length Madame Lustig made her appearance, inspected the ice cream, and proposed putting it outside the window; "there is no use in your tormenting yourself longer, my dear," she said, smiling, "we have something else to interest us; come, we must hold a consultation."

"About what?" asked Hildegarde.

"About a masquerade; were you ever at one?"

"Oh, yes, at school we had one almost every year; I was always ordered to be a Greek, or Circassian."

"Ah, that was children's play among yourselves; but I mean a real masquerade!"

"You mean the public masquerades, at the Theatre, perhaps?"

"Just so; should you like to go to one?"

"To be sure I should, of all things!" cried Hildegarde, eagerly. "When is it?"

"To night."

Her countenance fell. "Oh, if we had only known it sooner! If we had only been able to ask Papa!"

"There! I told you," cried Madame Berger, coming out of the kitchen, followed by the others, "I knew she would make all sorts of difficulties, and spoil Crescenç's pleasure!"

"I am sure," said Madame Lustig, "neither your father or mother would have any objection; when I go with you, and Madame Berger, and Mr. Hamilton."

"It is true Mamma said I was to do whatever you desired me——," began Hildegarde, with some hesitation.

"Oh, I will *command* your attendance, if that will be any relief to your conscience," cried Madame Lustig, with a loud laugh.

Hildegarde colored deeply, and looked towards Hamilton; he was eating almonds and raisins from a plate, which Madame Berger held towards

him. "Let us talk about our masks, and not about our consciences," cried the latter. "I must go home to dinner, or the Doctor will be impatient. We are to be black bats; black silk dresses; black dominos, with hanging sleeves, and hoods; masks half black, and a knot of white ribbon under the chin, that we may know each other. How many dominos shall I order?"

"For us all, Lina, for us all!" cried Crescenz, eagerly.

"We may as well dress at your house," cried Madame Lustig, "It is not necessary that Walburg should know anything about the matter. The Doctor will have gone out before seven?"

"Oh, yes, you may come at half-past six; I must have time to dress Mr. Hamilton, as well as myself, you know! Adieu, *au revoir*."

Immediately after dinner, Hildegard put on a black dress, and came to the drawing room, where Hamilton was sitting, or rather reclining, on the sofa, reading; she leaned slightly over him, and almost in a whisper, asked if he were disposed to give her advice, should she request it.

"I don't know," answered Hamilton, looking up, with a smile, "I have been so long dismissed from the office of preceptor, that I have quite got out of the habit of giving advice."

"Forget that you have been preceptor, and

take the name of friend," said Hildegarde, "we shall get on better, I think."

"I like the proposition," cried Hamilton, quickly rising from his recumbent position, "our ages are suitable. Let us," he added, laughing, "Let us now swear an eternal friendship."

"Agreed," said Hildegarde, accepting his offered hand. "And now, tell me, shall I go to this masquerade or not?"

"I thought you had already decided!"

"Not quite. I wish very much to go, that is the simple truth, but I fear, that under the name of obedience to Madame Lustig, I am trying to persuade myself, that I am following my mother's injunctions: while in fact, I am only seeking an excuse to do what I wish. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly."

"And you think, perhaps, I ought not to go?"

"I think; indeed I am sure, that I can give you no advice on the subject. I am too much interested in your decision, to be a 'righteous judge.'"

"How are you interested?"

"Simply thus; if you do not go, the whole party is spoiled for me."

Hildegarde was silent for more than a minute. She did not disclaim, she knew he had spoken his

thoughts. "If," she said at length, "if I had only known it in time to have asked my father's leave, I really do think he would have had no objection."

"If you think that, you may decide on going with a clear conscience."

"Is this your opinion; advice?"

"I give no advice," said Hamilton, laughing, "I only wish you to go."

"Then—I—will go," said Hildegarde, thoughtfully; "go—notwithstanding a kind of misgiving which I cannot overcome, a sort of a warning—a presentiment——."

"I should rather have suspected your sister of having misgivings and warnings, than you," said Hamilton, "yet she seems to have none."

"She is governed by her wishes, and Lina Berger: besides, it is not likely that any thing unpleasant should occur to her!"

"And to you?" asked Hamilton, surprised.

"Not likely, either," said Hildegarde, gaily; "for, thank goodness, Oscar must spend the evening with Marie when they are to be married to-morrow."

Raimund had been but once at the Rosenbergs since the ball, and had played cards the whole evening. Hamilton knew that she had not since spoken to him. Yet, no sooner had she pro-

nounced her cousin's name, than all his feelings changed, he bit his lip, and walked to the window,

"I wish,"—began Hildegarde, but she suddenly stopped, for she recognised Raimund's voice speaking to her sister in the passage. Hamilton strode across the room.

"Oh, stay! stay, I entreat of you!" she cried, anxiously.

"Do you not wish to be alone with your cousin?"

"No, no, no,—that is" she added, hurriedly,

"Yes—perhaps it is better——"

"As you please," said Hamilton, moving again towards the door.

Hildegarde seemed greatly embarrassed, "If you would only promise not to say anything to make——"

"I really do not understand you," cried Hamilton, impatiently.

"When he has been here for a minute or two," she said, quickly, "go for Crescenz and Madame Lustig, say they must come here—must remain,"—her cousin entered the room while she was speaking.

"I am sorry to interrupt you, my dear Hildegarde," he said, with a stiff, and evidently forced smile, "but I come to take leave——"

"Take leave! what do you mean?"

"I am to be executed to-morrow, you know."

"Ah!—so—"

"It is particularly kind of you and Crescenz to put on mourning for me beforehand," he continued, glancing gravely at her black dress.

"Oscar, how can you talk so?" said Hildegard, reproachfully, "such jesting is, to-day, particularly ill-timed."

"By heaven, I am not jesting. I never was less disposed to mirth than at this moment," he answered, falling heavily into a chair, and drawing his handkerchief across his forehead.

"Have you been with Marie?"

"Yes."

"And you will return to her?"

"I suppose I must."

Here Hamilton precipitately left the room to summon Madame Lustig and Crescenz, but they were much too busily engaged in the manufacture of a complicated cake to follow him, so he hurried back alone to the drawing room, and found Hildegard—in her cousin's arms. She was not struggling, she did not even move as he entered, while Raimund, not in the least disconcerted by his presence, passionately kissed her two or three times. At length she suddenly and vehemently pushed him from her, exclaiming, "Go: I hate you!"

"You hate me! Hate me! did you say? Let

me hear that once more, Hildegarde," he said, losing every trace of colour as he spoke.

"No, no—I don't hate you—but you have acted very—very ungenerously," said Hildegarde, with ill-suppressed emotion.

"I understand you: but you will forgive me this last offence, I hope?"

"Yes, I forgive you, and will try to forgive you all you have done to worry and alarm me since our acquaintance began," said Hildegarde, bitterly, "but this must indeed be the last offence."

"It will be, most certainly," said Raimund; and, taking both her hands, he looked at her long and earnestly, and then left the room without in any manner noticing Hamilton.

A long pause ensued. Hamilton's eyes were rivetted on his book, which he had again taken up; but he never turned over the leaf, nor did he move, when he became conscious that Hildegarde was standing beside him.

"That was the fulfilment of the promise made at the ball on Saturday," she at length said, in a very low voice. "I knew that his mind was in a state of unusual irritation, and his claiming a dance, which I had not promised him, proved his wish to quarrel with you. My fears alone made me consent."

Hamilton turned round. A light seemed sud-

denly to break upon him ; and Hildegarde's motives for many inexplicable actions became at once apparent. His first impulse was to tell her so, and to assure her of his increased admiration and affection ; but he recollected, just at the right moment, that all such explanations from him were a waste of words and time ; that he had told her so more than once himself. So, after a short but violent internal struggle, he said, with forced serenity, " My reliance on you will henceforth be unbounded."

She seemed perfectly satisfied with this answer. Notwithstanding its *laconicism*, she fully understood the extent of confidence which would in future be placed in her, and she left the room with a light heart.

CHAPTER III.

THE MASQUERADE.

FOUR muffled figures quitted the Rosenbergs' apartments about six o'clock in the evening, and not long after, a light figure bounded up the stairs, and knocked with closed hand on the door. Walburg cautiously looked through the grated aperture, but on recognising Count Raimund, she immediately opened it.

"Where are your young ladies gone? I saw them leaving the house a few minutes ago."

"They are gone to spend the evening with Madame Berger, I believe."

"Did you hear them say anything about going to the masquerade?"

"No; but Miss Crescenz did nothing but run

about and whisper the last half-hour, and Madame Lustig took the house keys with her, and said I might go to bed if they were not home before ten o'clock. I am almost sure they intend to go to the masquerade; and Miss Crescenz might have trusted me, as I should never have said anything about it."

"Perhaps you are mistaken," said Raimund, absently. "At all events it is better to say nothing about it to Madame Rosenberg," and he slowly descended the stairs, and walked towards Doctor Berger's house, remaining in the street near it, until he saw the five black masked figures enter a carriage. Though all studiously dressed alike, he easily recognised Madame Berger's small and Madame Lustig's stout figures, while Hildegarde and Crescenz were sufficiently above the usual height to make the group remarkable.

It was early when they entered the theatre, but the house was already crowded, the tiers of boxes were filled with spectators, who, later in the evening, joined the masks in the large ball-room formed by the junction of the pit and stage. Crescenz became alarmed when surrounded by a number of speaking masks, and clung to Hamilton's arm. Madame Berger, and Madame Lustig, on the contrary, laughed and talked, with a freedom which rather shocked Hamilton. Hildegarde at first

answered gaily all who addressed her; for she felt that she was perfectly unknown: but after some time, she perceived that two masks had joined their party, and seemed determined to remain with them. A slight young Turk had attached himself to Madame Berger, while a mysterious black domino followed her like a shadow.

"How much pleasanter it must be to look on from above," she observed, at length, "one has all the amusement without the press and anxiety of the crowd!"

"Oh dear! I have got quite used to it now," said Crescenz, "and am not at all afraid."

"If there are places in the boxes to be had," said Hamilton, "and you are willing to leave this turmoil, I am quite sure, I can procure them for you."

"Oh, thank you, let us ask Madame Lustig."

"But Madame Lustig protested against the plan. She could not allow them to leave her—it would be quite improper if they were to be seen alone with Mr. Hamilton—indeed, she would rather they were not seen at all, and she positively could not leave Madame Berger with that troublesome Turk, not having the least idea who he might be!"

"There is no use in asking Lina," said Crescenz to Hamilton, who had moved towards Madame

Berger. And indeed, all his arguments proved vain. "People should not go to masquerades who did not know how to enjoy themselves! She had no idea of coming to the Theatre to mope away the evening in a box—she could do that four times every week; besides the presence of Mr. Hamilton was necessary for propriety's sake, and she could not, and would not dispense with his attendance." All this was poured forth with a volubility in French, that attracted the attention of the bystanders. "No, the gay little devil of a masque must not think of going, nor her corpulent friend either!" and they were again drawn on with the crowd: Hamilton followed with the sisters, who now ceased altogether to speak. Crescenz had also become aware that they were followed by a black, taciturn figure, which, as she whispered to Hamilton, put her in mind of inquisition, and all sorts of horrors.

"But," said Hildegard, who had heard her remark, "we are also quite black, and probably make the same disagreeable impression on other people."

"He seems quite unknown! I have not seen him speak to any human being——" said Crescenz.

"We have neither for the last half hour," answered her sister.

"Oh my dear, if *you* have no objection to having him at your elbow all the evening, I have nothing more to say," cried Crescenz, "that is quite a matter of taste."

"Is he annoying you in any way," asked Hamilton.

"Not in the least," answered Hildegarde. "The crowd is so great that he could not easily leave us, even if he wished it."

In the meantime, Madame Berger and Madame Lustig, encouraged by the masks around them, had begun to follow the unmasked groups who had descended from the boxes. They knew the private histories of most persons, and were so unmerciful in their remarks—so mischievous in the distribution of their *bon bons* and devices, that they at length found it expedient to plan a retreat, which was no longer easy, as they were followed by several persons who wished to find out who they were. A dance which was to be performed by the *corps de ballet*, in costume, seemed to favour them. They had only time to whisper to each other, "Home, as fast as possible by the front door of the Theatre," when they were pushed about and separated in all directions. Several coaches were in attendance, Hamilton immediately procured one, and they were soon in it, laughing merrily over their adventures.

"How well we all managed to come together after all!" cried Madame Berger, "I really had begun to fear we should not get rid of my Turk—who could he have been?"

"I don't know," said Madame Lustig, yawning, "but I am glad that we five are safely together again, and not running about looking for each other, which might easily have happened."

"It often does happen," said Madame Berger, counting her companions, "one, two, three, four, five—There was a black familiar of the inquisition following Hildegard all night—I really was afraid he might have been among us!"

To her house according to agreement, they all repaired to change their dresses. Hamilton assisted them to descend from the carriage, the last person sprung unaided to the ground, threw the black domino back, with a quick wave of the hand, and discovered the figure of the Turk, "Good night, Madame Berger," he cried, in a feigned voice, "Good night—good night," and with a gay laugh, he darted down the street.

"Was there ever anything so provoking!" exclaimed Madame Berger, in a voice denoting great annoyance, "what have I said to him to night? or rather, what have I not said to him? How vexatious—he must have borrowed a domino from a friend in order to get among us!"

"But," cried Madame Lustig, in a voice of alarm, "one of us must have been left behind."

"It must be Crescenz," cried Hamilton, "I will return to the Theatre directly for her."

"It must be Hildegarde," cried Crescenz, who stood beside him.

Without uttering a word, he sprang into the carriage, and the coachman drove off. His anxiety was indescribable—in the crowd he had felt the absolute necessity of releasing the arm of one of the sisters, and deceived by the extreme likeness in their figures, had almost forcibly retained Crescenz, who chanced to be at the moment followed by the silent mask, and whom he consequently mistook for her sister.

At the theatre, he dismissed the coachman, and began making inquiries. "A black domino alone, separated from a party of friends?" Numbers of black dominos had been seen—many had been separated from their friends! was the usual answer. At length, a footman who had been lounging at a distance, observed, that about half an hour before, a black domino—a lady, had been stunned by a blow from the pole of a carriage, and had been carried off by another black domino.

"That may have been Hildegarde!" cried Hamilton, in a state of fearful anxiety.

"I think that *was* the name he called her," said the man, preparing to walk away.

"He! Who is he?" asked Hamilton.

"I don't know—he said he lived close by, and that he was a near relation."

"Raimund!" almost groaned Hamilton, as he rushed out of the theatre towards the lodgings, which he knew were in one of the adjoining streets.

The door at one side of the entrance gate was slightly ajar, it had probably been left so by some servants who had stolen off to the masquerade, and did not wish to announce their return by ringing the bell. Raimund's rooms were on the ground floor, a couple of steps led to them. Hamilton ascended—the door was open—he entered a narrow passage, and stood opposite the entrance to one of the chambers, knocked first gently, then loudly—shook the door, no sound reached him, at length he moved towards another door and called out "Hildegarde, for Heaven's sake, if you are here, answer me." He thought now he heard some one moving in the room."

"Let me in—open the door"—he cried, pushing with all his strength against it.

"Wait a moment," said a voice which he with difficulty recognised as Hildegarde's, "Wait—I—must—take the key from——"

"Heaven and earth, Hildegarde! How can you be so calm, when you know how anxious we must be about you! Are you alone?"

"No—yes," she answered, quite close to the door.

"Count Raimund, you have no right to make a prisoner of your cousin. Open the door directly," cried Hamilton, shaking it until the hinges rattled.

He heard at length the key placed with a trembling hand in the lock—it turned, and Hildegarde stood before him. The hood of her Capuchin was thrown back, and her features, deadly pale and rigid in an expression of horror, met his view. She pointed silently towards a figure lying on the ground, which, when Hamilton approached, he found to be the corpse of her cousin! He must have shot himself through the mouth, for the upper part of his head, hair, and brain, were scattered in frightful bloody masses around. A more hideous object could hardly be imagined; he turned away, and seizing Hildegarde's hand, drew her out of the room, while he whispered, "What a dreadful scene for you to have witnessed!"

Scarcely were they in the street, when putting her hand to her head, she exclaimed, "My gloves—mask—handkerchief are in his room—is it of any consequence?"

"Of the greatest," cried Hamilton. "If your

name be on the handkerchief it may lead to most unpleasant inquiries. Wait here—I must return to the room.”

As he entered the room for the second time, he observed an appearance of confusion in it, which, in his haste and anxiety about Hildegarde, had before escaped his observation. Her gloves and handkerchief he found near the stove, and not far from them, to his great surprise, a dagger! On the table, beside the small shaded lamp, stood a wine bottle and tumblers, writing materials, and several letters were heaped together; and, on glancing towards them, he found one addressed to Hildegarde, which he immediately put in his pocket, and then prepared to leave; but, to his dismay, he heard the sound of approaching voices, and at once, his unpleasant, perhaps dangerous, situation occurred to him. His known enmity to Raimund made it absolutely necessary for him to endeavour to leave the house without being recognised, and having tied on Hildegarde’s mask, he took refuge in a small wood room ready to escape the first opportunity that should offer. The persons whose voices he had heard were servants; one of them, a French girl, was speaking while he gained his hiding place, and he heard her say, “The old lady desired me to call her son, I would not go into his room for all the world at this time of night.”

"What does she want with him?"

"Oh, she says she heard the report of a gun or pistol a short time ago, and is alarmed. She asked me if I had not heard it too?"

"And did you hear it?"

"How could I, when I was not in the house? The best thing I can do is to say, that Count Oscar has not yet returned home. I am afraid she won't believe me, as he never remains late at those Hoffmanns."

"But you may tell her that I saw him going to the masquerade at nine o'clock, in a black domino. We can knock at the door, and if we get no answer he is not there."

"And if he should answer?"

"Why, then, we can speak to him together."

"While they knocked at the door, Hamilton glided out; but not, as he had hoped, unseen, for they turned and ran after him into the street, calling out, "Count Oscar! Count Oscar! Madame la Comtesse wishes to speak to you."

Hamilton shook his hand impatiently towards them, which made them desist, and then breathlessly joined Hildegard, who was standing motionless on the spot where he had left her.

"I ought not to have allowed you to return," she said, clasping her hands convulsively round his

arm, "it was thoughtless—selfish of me. Had you been seen!"

"I have been seen, but not recognised," said Hamilton; "I put on your mask, and some servants mistook me for Count Raimund."

"Can that lead to any discovery?" asked Hildegard, stopping in the middle of the cold cheerless street.

"On the contrary; I rather think it will prevent any discovery being made until to-morrow morning."

"His wedding-day!" said Hildegard, with a stifled groan. "Oh, what will Marie de Hoffmann think of him?"

"She will perhaps guess the truth," said Hamilton. "I believe this marriage was the immediate cause of the rash act."

"Perhaps I am also to blame," said Hildegard, in a scarcely audible voice.

"It may be: but most innocently, I am sure. It was not your fault that your cousin loved you so madly."

"I—I—did not exactly mean that," said Hildegard, with a shudder.

"Then, what did you mean?" Tell me all that occurred. That is," added Hamilton, for the first time since he had joined her, recurring to his former fears, "that is—if you can."

“ I can, and will, though the recollection is most painful,” said Hildegarde, in an agitated manner; and, after a moment’s pause, she began : “ Having been separated from you all, I naturally endeavoured to reach the front door of the theatre, where we had agreed to assemble as soon as possible; always, to my great annoyance followed by the black domino, who, in the end, proved to be Oscar. Had I known it sooner, it would have saved me a world of horrors. I was excessively alarmed, as you may imagine, and forgetting my character as mask, inquired, in my natural voice, of every one I met, if they had seen four black dominos together? Every one had seen dominos such as I had described; and after hearing that some had left in carriages and some on foot, I at length determined to walk home alone. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by several parties endeavouring to drive off together, and hoping by that means to escape from the domino who had become an object of terror to me—like a thing in a dream—I ran at full speed out of the theatre. In order to reach the quieter streets, I unfortunately turned towards the advancing line of carriages—the crowd was enormous, and I was buffeted about in all directions, until at length the pole of a carriage threw me down and completely stunned me—”

"So it was you! And were you hurt?" asked Hamilton anxiously, and stopping to look at his companion. Strange to say he had, until that moment, forgotten what he had heard at the theatre!

"No—not much—my shoulder is bruised, I believe—but my head fell on the ground, and I was insensible for some minutes. Some one, probably Oscar, must have seized the horses heads and forced them backwards. When I recovered, I felt myself supported by him, and recognised his voice immediately. There was a terrible stamping of horses, and noise, and swearing about us, and I made a violent effort to walk. With Oscar's assistance, I reached the next street, he proposed my going into his lodgings for a few minutes until I felt stronger, which I at first refused, but becoming so faint when we were passing his house that I could scarcely stand, I thought it better to go willingly than perhaps be carried there in a state of insensibility. A lamp was burning in the room when we entered, and wine was on the table; he poured me out a glass without speaking, which I immediately drank, and then sat down on the sofa to rest. In the meantime, he walked silently up and down the room and then returned to the table, where he quickly swallowed several tumblers of wine. Alarmed by

his manner, I immediately stood up, and declared that I was quite able to return home. If he were not disposed to accompany me, I would go alone. His answer was locking the door and putting the key in his pocket."

"And you?" asked Hamilton, quickly, "What did you do?"

"I cannot describe the undefined terror which this proceeding caused me: but on seeing the dagger, with which he had once so frightened me, lying on the table, I suddenly seized it, and retreated towards the stove. He asked me what I meant: but I only answered by repeating the words, 'Open the door—let me go—let me go.' He, however, then informed me that he had no intention of doing either one or the other—he was determined for once that I should hear him, and answer him; and he ordered me peremptorily to give him the dagger. I, of course, refused; and—and—"

"Well"—said Hamilton, breathlessly.

"A violent struggle ensued: he wrested it forcibly out of my hand, and I believe, in trying not to hurt me, was wounded himself, for I saw blood trickling down the blade, as he held it triumphantly up in the air. In springing to the other side of the stove, I found a bell rope. Perhaps I

wrong Oscar, but I believe the fear of that bell, alone preserved me from further insult."

"He must have been perfectly desperate," observed Hamilton, taking a long breath.

"He appeared so to me," continued Hildgarde, shuddering. "I saw him change colour as I grasped the rope: but, with wonderful coolness, he advised me to refrain from summoning witnesses to my being in his room at such an hour of the night: that I had entered willingly, and no human being would believe my assertion of innocence, as unfortunately his reputation was such, that mine would be lost should I be seen and recognised. Though trembling with anger, I perceived the justice of his remark, and carefully avoided ringing, though I held the cord tighter than ever. He came nearer and nearer, and talked long about his love, and despair, and hatred of you. I was too much agitated to understand much of what he said; and I believe he perceived it at last, for he threw himself at my feet, and declared he would die there. I pushed back his hands with disgust, and told him that he need not hope again to terrify me—I knew he had no thought of dying, but I once more requested him to open the door and give me my liberty. He started up frantically, and taking a small pistol

from the table, again approached me. I asked him if he intended to murder me? He looked capable of that, or anything else, at the moment, and when he pointed it towards his own head, I—"Hildegarde paused, and covered her face with her hands. Hamilton did not speak, and she again continued. "I did not—indeed, I did not for a moment think him serious, he was such a consummate actor! I had seen him in less than half an hour change from calm to furious so often, that I thought this was only a new effort to work upon my feelings—I never could—had I dreamed of the consequences—At all events, I shall never, never be able to forgive myself!"

"You have not told me what you did," said Hamilton, in a low voice.

"I—laughed—and no sooner had he heard the horrid mocking sound of my forced laughter, than he pulled the trigger, and fell, so horribly mangled, to the ground!" She leaned against the corner of a house, and gasped for breath. "Do you think," she asked, at length, "do you think that I was the immediate cause of his death?"

"No:" said Hamilton, "I can give you nearly the assurance that he had intended to commit suicide—this very night perhaps—his table was covered with letters, and one addressed to you, I brought away with me."

"Now heaven be praised, that this sin is not on my soul!" she cried, fervently, and then added, "I have nothing more to tell you—I don't know how the time passed until you came—it appeared very long, but I never thought of going away. You will understand why I was so dilatory in opening the door, when you recollect that the key was in the pocket of his waistcoat."

"And now," said Hamilton, hurrying towards Madame Berger's house, "let me recommend secrecy. I do not think any one will imagine that we know of this melancholy affair. Should we speak of it, we might be suspected of knowing more than we may be disposed to relate."

"I quite agree with you," said Hildegarde, "and have not the slightest wish to speak of it to any one—not even to my father—for never having spoken to him about Oscar, my confidence coming too late, might offend him, as it did about Count Zedwitz."

"You will have to make a great effort, and conceal every appearance of agitation from your sister and Madame Lustig," said Hamilton. "I think we had better avoid the proposed supper at Madame Berger's. Give me your capuchin, and I will bring you your bonnet and cloak."

Hildegarde seated herself on the stairs, and leaned her face on her hands.

Hamilton's appearance without her, caused instantaneous and great alarm : but when he said she was waiting for them on the stairs, they became almost angry.

"So she won't come to supper!" cried Madame Berger. "Just like her—an eternal spoil-sport."

"I fear she has caught cold," said Hamilton, looking around for the cloak, "You forget how long she has been in the streets in her light dress."

"But," said Madame Lustig. "she must say she caught cold making the ice-cream at the passage window. I shall never have courage to confess that we have been at this masquerade, and that she has been running the streets at this hour of the night! Was she far from the theatre when you met her?"

"I found her in —— Street," replied Hamilton, evasively, and beginning to heap up cloaks and boas on his arm.

"Not so fast if you please," cried Madame Lustig. "Give me my cloak—I have no fancy for catching cold."

"This is too provoking," exclaimed Madame Berger; "I thought we should have had such a merry supper—the Doctor in bed—and everything so nice! Take a glass of wine, at least, before you go, Mr. Hamilton."

He quickly drank the wine, and then ran down stairs. Hildegarde stood up, and allowed him to put the cloak on her shoulders, fasten it, sling her boa round her throat, and even place her bonnet on her head; she merely asked, "Are they coming?"

"Hildegarde," cried Madame Berger, who accompanied the others with a candle in her hand, "I take it very ill of you to spoil my supper in this manner, you might have come up if only for half an hour."

"You have caught cold—you are ill," whispered Hamilton, in English.

"I am sorry to spoil your supper party, Lina, but I am really ill, and must go home," said Hildegarde, in so constrained and husky a voice, that Madame Lustig, mistaking it for hoarseness, hurried down the stairs, exclaiming, "Good gracious, the child can hardly speak! What will her father say to me?"

About an hour after, while Hamilton was still walking uneasily up and down his room, he heard some one knock at the door—on opening it, he was scarcely surprised to see Hildegarde. No trace of colour had returned to her face, but her features had regained their usual calm, statue-like expression.

"I knew I should still find you in this room,"

she said, with a faint smile, "You may give me my letter, I can read it now."

It was on the table, and Hamilton pushed it towards her. She sat down, drew a candle near her, and, shading her eyes with one hand, held the letter steadily with the other. When she had finished reading it, she gave it to Hamilton, saying, "That is a wild composition—how fortunate that it fell into your hands! Had it been sent to me, I should have been placed in a most unpleasant position. My father, my mother, would have read it—I must have explained, and Marie de Hoffmann would perhaps have heard of Oscar's dislike to her, and have blamed me more than I deserve."

Hamilton read the letter, and when she took it out of his hand, she tore it to pieces. "I wish I could burn these remnants," she said, crushing them together in her hand.

"Nothing more easy," said Hamilton, pointing towards the stove. They walked to it, and deliberately burned the pieces one by one; the incoherent sentences becoming once more legible in a charred state before they crumbled into ashes.

"Thank you," said Hildegard, turning away; "and now, good night."

"Will you not take a candle; or, shall I light you?" asked Hamilton.

“Neither : I do not wish to wake Walburg.”

As Hamilton held the door open, he recollected vividly the last time she had been in his room at night. She was too much pre-occupied to think of it ; but, stopping suddenly, she turned to him, and said, “Do you remember my warning, my presentiment of evil ?”

“Perfectly,” he answered : “but I think the idea was caused by your imagining you were about to do something which your father perhaps might not quite approve.”

“You account for everything rationally, and will of course not believe me, when I tell you, that I knew and *felt* beforehand that Oscar would come to our house yesterday, and act precisely as he did.”

“I do believe you : but it was your natural understanding which made you think he would take advantage of your parent’s absence to claim your promise. Then the almost certainty of my presence, to give the performance a zest. Perhaps, however, the strongest motive of all, but which you could not have known, was to take leave of you. I must do him the justice to say, I believe he thought he saw you for the last time then.”

“Would that it had been !” said Hildegarde. “I could at least have regretted him as a near relation, and felt pity for his untimely end.”

"And do you not feel this?" asked Hamilton.

"No," answered Hildegarde, sternly. "In recalling calmly his words and actions this night, I find him wholly unworthy of esteem. My recollection of him, now stained with blood, is hideous, most horrible." She shuddered while she spoke, and then walked down the dark passage without looking at Hamilton, who held his door open until she had entered her room.

CHAPTER IV.

WHERE IS THE BRIDEGROOM?

HAMILTON's slumbers were disturbed by confused dreams of Hildegarde and Raimund: but towards morning he fell into a heavy sleep, from which he was awakened by the return of Mr. Rosenberg, his wife, and children; the latter, probably to indemnify themselves for their forced good behaviour during their absence, now scampered riotously up and down the corridor, blowing little wooden trumpets, which had been given them by their grandfather just before they had left him.

When Hamilton was dressed, he found the whole family assembled at breakfast, all in high spirits. Crescenz sprung to meet him in her bridesmaid's dress, looking so pretty that Major

Stultz's laboured compliments were for once not only pardonable, but even allowable.

"Only think!" she exclaimed, "Hildegarde does not like being bridesmaid, though Marie is much more her friend than mine! She says she has got a headache, and a cold."

"I knew," observed Madame Lustig, "I knew she would catch cold, when I saw her turning the ice cream yesterday. I ought not to have permitted it."

"The cold is not of much importance," observed Madame Rosenberg, "I rather think she dislikes putting on a thin white muslin dress in the morning."

"A very natural dislike at this time of year," said her husband. "It makes me freeze only to look at Crescenz."

"Oh, I don't feel at all cold," cried Crescenz, "I was down at the Hoffmanns' too, and there is such a splendid *déjeuné* laid out—and Marie really looks quite lovely in her white silk dress and orange flowers!"

"You must excuse my doubting your last assertion, Crescenz," observed her father, smiling. "Mademoiselle de Hoffmann is a most amiable, excellent person, but as to looking quite lovely in any dress, the thing is impossible."

"This day week," said Major Stultz, pom-

pously, "we shall see a bride who looks lovely in every dress!"

At this moment Hildegarde entered the room; her paleness was still more apparent than the night before, and her drooping eyelids showed plainly that she had not slept. She wished Hamilton good morning without looking at him, and then turned to her father.

"My dear child," said the latter, taking her hand compassionately, "you seem really ill—Shall I send for Doctor Berger?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, "I—I—am only cold," and she walked shivering to the stove.

"It will soon be time to go down stairs," said Madame Rosenberg. "I think we had better dress ourselves for the occasion. This *hint*," she added, "is intended for the Major too—he seems to forget the present, in anticipation of the future."

Major Stultz laughed, bowed to Crescenz, who was not looking at him, and left the room with his future father-in-law.

The moment the door closed, Crescenz bounded towards her sister. "Oh, Hildegarde, you have no idea how beautifully arranged everything is down stairs! What a pity there are to be so few people. It was very stupid of Oscar to prefer driving off into the country at this time of year, to having a gay dance in the evening! However, Marie is

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quite satisfied. Do you know, the old Countess Raimund was below, looking so red and apoplectic. She did not take the least notice of me, though I heard her ask who I was. I dare say her husband would not acknowledge us either : but he was not there. They said he was to come with Oscar, Another carriage has just driven up to the door— Perhaps that may be Oscar—I wonder, will he be married in uniform? No—these are some acquaintances of the Hoffmanns—we don't know them——”

As she continued at the window, her sister approached Hamilton. “Is not this a melancholy mummer?” she said, glancing at her bridal dress. “I feel as if I were under the influence of a frightful dream, forced to act against my inclinations, and in momentary expectation of some dreadful catastrophe. Am I then really awake?” she added, extending her cold hand to him.

“I hope at least that I am not dreaming,” he said, holding it firmly, and looking at her until a transient flush passed across her pale features.

“It will be impossible for me to appear surprised when I hear what I already know but too well,” she said.

“No one will observe you in such a moment, and I will endeavour to remain near you.”

Here Madame Rosenberg summoned them, and

they all descended the stairs together. There were about twenty persons assembled, to whom Madame de Hoffmann was talking in her usual loud, sharp manner, while she paid particular attention to a grand, stiff-looking, elderly woman, in whom Hamilton immediately recognized the mother of Raimund. Hildegarde and Crescenz went into the adjoining room, where the bride was loitering until the arrival of the bridegroom. Hamilton walked to the window, and awaited in anxious silence the expected scene ; a minute after, Count Raimund's carriage drove to the door. Without waiting to see who descended from it, Madame de Hoffmann conducted her daughter into the drawing-room, and while occupied in receiving the congratulations of her assembled friends, the poor girl did not perceive that her mother had been somewhat mysteriously called out of the room ; soon after the Countess Raimund was summoned, and she returned no more ; Hamilton saw her assisted into her carriage, and driven off. Then a couple of elderly gentlemen and Mr. Rosenberg were sent for ; the latter alone returned, deprived of his usual serenity, and evidently at a loss what to say. He approached Mademoiselle de Hoffmann, looked round the room, and then said, " I am sorry to be the bearer of unpleasant tidings—but—Count Raimund has become so suddenly

and alarmingly ill that his mother has been obliged to return home—and—the marriage—cannot possibly take place—to-day.”

“ Ill ! ” exclaimed Marie, growing very pale ;
“ Where is my mother ? ”

She entered at the moment, and Hamilton saw from her extreme agitation that she knew all. She spoke hurriedly and confusedly with her guests, unconsciously showing her impatience to get rid of them. The Rosenbergs were the last, and were about to retire, when Marie laid her hand on Hildegarde’s arm, and begged her to remain with her.

“ Mademoiselle Hildegarde will not be able to offer you much consolation, Marie,” said her mother, bitterly ; “ there is little or no chance of Count Raimund’s recovery.”

“ While there is life, there is hope,” said the poor girl, bursting into tears. “ I suppose he has got the cholera, but many people have recovered from it, and why should not he ? ”

Madame Rosenberg left the room, followed by her husband, Crescenz, and Hamilton.

About an hour afterwards, Hildegarde returned home, and changed her dress. She found her father, mother, and Major Stultz, talking eagerly in the drawing-room ; the moment she appeared, her father exclaimed, “ See, there is Hildegarde

already in mourning ! I am sure a natural feeling of propriety induced her to put on a black dress."

"A natural feeling of pride," cried Madame Rosenberg ; "she wishes people to know that a Count Raimund was her cousin : her aunt, however, the Countess, examined her superciliously enough through her *lorgnette* to-day, without in the least appearing to remember the relationship."

"What is the matter?" said Hildegarde, appealing to her father.

"The matter!" cried Madame Rosenberg. "Your father most absurdly wishes you and your sister to put on mourning for your worthless cousin, and proposes Crescenz's marriage being deferred until after Easter. Heaven knows, in these cholera times, where we may all be in six or seven weeks."

"Babette," said her husband, reproachfully, "this is going too far."

"Well, I did not quite mean to say so much, but I am against any further delays ; let the girls wear mourning if you wish it, and I promise to arrange the wedding so quietly that no one will know anything about the matter."

"This is a reasonable proposal," said Major Stultz. "Crescenz can put on her mourning after her marriage, and wear it for six months if you wish it."

"A few weeks, for decency's sake," said Mr. Rosenberg, "I certainly do desire. Count Oscar at least acknowledged the relationship, and his parent's neglect cannot alter the position of my daughters, or prevent them from mourning the unhappy end of their mother's nephew."

In the meantime, Hamilton had approached Hildegarde, and asked her how her friend had borne the intelligence.

"We did not venture to tell her. She still thinks and talks of cholera; but," she added, in a low voice, "imagine Madame de Hoffmann taking me aside, and in the most abrupt and unfeeling manner informing me of the real facts, fixing her small inquisitive eyes on my face the whole time. She little knew how well prepared I was for her intelligence."

"What did you say?"

"Very little. That it was a melancholy affair altogether. That Oscar had possessed some good, and many brilliant qualities, but that had he lived, I feared he was not calculated to have made Marie happy."

"Did she agree with you?"

"More than I wished. She said, that after the first month she had endeavoured to draw back, but that the Raimunds had not allowed her. She had long perceived that Oscar did not care for her

daughter, and had suspected that I was the object of his love, and that I returned it too, but she said she was now convinced of her error, and begged my pardon for her unjust suspicion."

"And you?"

"I pardoned her without difficulty, as you may suppose. Indeed, Oscar's conduct must have alarmed and irritated any reasonable mother. Marie's blindness has been incomprehensible to me."

"You forget that love is blind."

"Yes, to faults, but not to flagrant neglect."

"To weaknesses, faults, ill-usage, to everything," said Hamilton.

"I suppose it is so," said Hildegarde, thoughtfully; "Marie certainly was blind to all his errors, and will probably ever remain so. I was dazzled myself at first, as you may remember."

"Perfectly," said Hamilton, dryly.

"I know I have a sad habit of taking likings and dislikings," she continued, listlessly.

"Yes, and on such occasions you are not exactly blind; you can even mistake faults for perfections."

"I am afraid that it is true," said Hildegarde, leaning back in her chair, with half closed eyes, and speaking very slowly. "I remember for some time thinking Madame de Hoffmann agreeable and entertaining; her severe remarks I mistook

for wit, until they were directed against myself."

"And what an antipathy you took to me at first sight," observed Hamilton.

"You have no idea how she disliked you," cried Crescenz, who had, unperceived, approached them. They both started, and then blushed as she continued; "if you had only heard her in Berchtesgaden railing at the cold, proud Englishman."

"Crescenz," said Hildegarde, with evident effort, "don't let us talk of that now; I cannot defend myself against you both to-day, I am too tired."

"Perhaps you begin to think differently of him," said Crescenz, archly; "Lina Berger may after all be right. When we were waiting for you last night at her house, she said she thought your hatred might in the end turn into——"

"Oh, Crescenz," gasped Hildegarde, in so unnatural a tone, that her father called out, "Why, what's the matter there?"

"Hildegarde is getting into a passion," said Madame Rosenberg; "do you not see how she is changing colour?"

And changing colour she was with frightful rapidity; no one but Hamilton knew that she had been twenty-four hours without eating, for in the hurry of preparing for the wedding, her not breakfasting had passed unobserved. None but he knew

the shock which her nerves had received the night before, the constraint under which she had since been labouring; he alone understood that Crescenz' last remark was the drop which made the cup of bitterness to overflow, and yet he was quite as much shocked as the others, when, stretching out her arm, and vainly grasping the air for support, she fell senseless on the floor.

"Crescenz, what have you said to your sister?" cried her father, rushing forwards.

"I don't know—I don't remember. What did I say?" she cried, appealing with a look of alarm to Hamilton.

Mr. Rosenberg raised Hildegard, who, however, gave no sign of returning life; he was so alarmed, and trembled so violently, that Hamilton was obliged to assist him to lay her on the sofa, while Crescenz opened the window and Madame Rosenberg went for water. Their united efforts at length brought her to consciousness; she opened her eyes, perceived her father's look of terror as he hung over her, and while assuring him that she was quite well again, relapsed into a state of insensibility, which lasted until she had been removed to her room, and placed on her bed.

Doctor Berger was sent for. He hoped her illness might prove of no consequence, but she must be kept very quiet, there were symptoms

which might lead to typhus or brain fever. Crescenz repeated this opinion to her sister, who, on hearing it, immediately desired to see Hamilton.

"But not now; not here," said Crescenz.

"No, I believe I must write a few lines, and you can give my note to him as he passes on his way to his room."

Crescenz brought a pencil and paper, and Hildegard wrote in English:

"You have heard the doctor's opinion of my illness; I think myself it will only prove a severe cold. Should it, however, end in fever, and should I become *delirious*, you must go to Mademoiselle Hortense, one of the governesses in our school, tell her my situation, and say I request her to come and take charge of me. My stepmother will be satisfied with the arrangement, and you have no refusal to fear; my motives you will easily guess."

"May I read it?" asked Crescenz, as she received the paper from her sister, "ah! it is English; how fond you are of every thing English."

"It is a commission to Mademoiselle Hortense; you may see her name," said Hildegard. "Mr. Hamilton can more easily go to her than you can."

"Oh, if that be all, I am glad you have chosen him, for you know I am horribly afraid of her."

"I know," said Hildegard, pressing her hand on her forehead, and turning away.

The next two days were passed over in uncertainty, and Hamilton wandered about disconsolately enough, but on the third, Hildegard appeared to relieve his mind, and so great was her father's joy at her recovery, that he actually spent the whole evening at home, without even requiring a rubber of whist.

CHAPTER V.

THE WEDDING AU TROISIEME.

SEVERAL days passed over. Count Raimund's death had been much discussed among his acquaintance, who almost unanimously agreed, in thinking he had committed the rash act to avoid a connexion so much beneath him. He was more regretted than he deserved; his various talents having made him unusually popular, and, in the society in which he had moved, people were not generally in the habit of studying character, or seeking motives of action. His circle was, however, so completely unknown to the Rosenbergs; they were so totally without any sort of communication with any member of it, now that Count Zedwitz had ceased to frequent their house, that they heard none of the remarks—not one of the

particulars. It spared Hildegarde much anxiety, for his wounded hand, the blood stained dagger, and open door, had caused many enquiries; and, had it not been for a letter which he had written to his father (in the vain endeavour to exculpate himself), might have led to suspicions of murder.

The Rosenbergs heard nothing, and the preparations for Crescenz' marriage began; they were conducted with ostentatious secrecy to please Mr. Rosenberg, who had consented to its taking place sooner than had been expected, as the Hoffmanns had left the house, and removed altogether to Augsburg. Madame Berger had promised to play waltzes if the company should prove numerous enough to enable them to dance, and Madame Lustig had spent two or three afternoons cooking for the supper. On the wedding day, Hamilton was not a little surprised to find Crescenz sitting composedly at breakfast in her gingham morning wrapper, while her father left the room to go to his office as usual.

"I believe I have dressed too early," he said, glancing at his studied toilet; "may I ask at what hour——"

"At five in the afternoon," answered Hildegarde. "Mamma has determined to keep her promise, and has desired our friends to meet us at the Frauen Church. On our return it will be

almost dark, and no one will know that we have a wedding in the house."

"But we shall dance," cried Crescenz, "and Major Stultz said I might waltz as often as I pleased with you this evening!"

"How very kind!" said Hamilton, smiling; "and how often do you intend to make use of the permission?"

"That depends upon you, I should think," she answered, blushing.

"You had better not trust to my discretion. I shall be tempted to make up for lost time, and dance with you the whole evening. You have put no sugar in my coffee," he added, turning with a look of mock distress to Hildegarde. "Did you forget it on purpose to punish me for being so late?"

"No. I—I was thinking of something——"

"And that something?"

"Is not of much importance. I was thinking that had you made that speech to Crescenz a few months ago, I should have been angry, for I should have imagined you were amusing yourself at her expense—whereas I now know that you mean nothing, but that you will dance two or three times with her this evening."

"And," said Hamilton, warmly, "and that I like to dance with her, and am obliged to her

for wishing to dance with me. I meant that too."

"I knew you did," cried Crescenz, triumphantly. "I am sure I always understood you better than Hildegarde, notwithstanding all her cleverness; but from the time that Count Zedwitz told her that you were already quite a man of the world, a—a what was the word Hildegarde?"

"I don't remember the word," she answered, calmly.

"It meant, I remember," said Crescenz, "a person who was too cold and calculating for his years—who was too worldly to have much feeling."

"That was unjust—that was saying too much," cried Hamilton, colouring.

"So Hildegarde thought also, but she has always insisted that you are proud and calculating, and that you seek to amuse yourself with other people's feelings and weaknesses."

"Is this your opinion of me?" said Hamilton, turning to Hildegarde.

"It was," she replied, steadily.

"Oh, Hildegarde is not afraid to say what she thinks; her opinion of you must have greatly changed, if it be what you would like to hear."

Hildegarde moved behind her sister to hide the intense blush, which now spread over her features,

and, placing her hand on her shoulder, perhaps to prevent her from turning round, she said, in a low voice, and with an embarrassed manner, "Crescenz, you have no idea I am sure how you are painning me at this moment. You are forcing me to confess, that I have not in this instance acted towards you with my usual candour. I have the very highest opinion of Mr. Hamilton."

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed Crescenz, while she endeavoured to catch a glimpse of her sister's face, but Hildegarde moved still further back, and continued. "That I disliked him at first is most true, more on your account, however, than on mine; for his open hostility to me was excusable—his covert attentions to you unpardonable."

"But," said Crescenz, who seemed altogether to have forgotten Hamilton's presence; "but when did you begin to think differently of him?"

"From the time that he has ceased to be the subject of altercation between us," answered Hildegarde, bending over her sister, and kissing her forehead.

"But Hildegarde," cried Crescenz, turning round with unexpected energy, "before we went to the ball, do you remember, when I told you that Lina Berger had said that Mr. Hamilton might still be my *scha*——"

Hildegarde's two hands closed over her mouth, and the word was stifled in utterance. "Good gracious! I quite forgot he was still here," she cried, making a slight effort to laugh, and then running out of the room.

A long pause ensued. Hildegarde began to arrange the cups and saucers on a tray, until Hamilton, without looking up, asked her if she could remember the very time when her opinion of him had changed.

"Perfectly; it was the night of Crescenz' quarrel with Major Stultz. Your explanations by moonlight in our room were upright and honourable."

"And you forgave my having flirted with her at Seon?"

"Yes; and I forgive your having tried to do the same with me here."

"The case is totally different," began Hamilton.

"There is some difference, I allow," said Hildegarde, "you warned me so well, that it would have been inexcusable my not understanding you—besides, I had the advantage of hearing from Count Zedwitz, that you considered yourself at liberty to act as you pleased, after having so fairly warned me."

"Zedwitz's love for you, made him forget his

friendship for me altogether," said Hamilton, with some irritation.

"I do not blame your conduct to me," said Hildegard, "you wanted to improve yourself in German, and found quarrelling or flirting with me the most exciting method. I have profited by your society also, for I have not only learned to pronounce English, but," she added, with an arch smile, "I begin to understand something of the art of flirting too, of which I do assure you, I knew nothing when our acquaintance began."

"Oh, do not say that," cried Hamilton, "you are only joking, I am sure, for you have no inclination that way, but your sister Crescenz——"

"My sister Crescenz, knew nothing of your propensities that way at Seon, and, therefore, I blame your conduct towards her. Your love, if you ever felt any, was pardonable; people cannot help that I believe—but your endeavours to make her dislike Major Stultz, were quite unpardonable."

"I acknowledge it," said Hamilton, gravely, "and regret it."

"That fault you were able in some measure to repair," continued Hildegard, "but perhaps, you are not aware that you have been the cause of frequent altercations between me and my sister—and that almost total estrangement has taken place between us in consequence."

"And is that my fault too?" asked Hamilton.

"I don't know," she replied, sorrowfully.

"Before we became acquainted with you, we never had the most trifling difference of opinion—and now we never think alike, and all confidence is at an end!"

"You take the matter too seriously," said Hamilton, "I am convinced, your sister is not aware of any estrangement."

"I am afraid you are mistaken—" began Hildegard, but at this moment Crescenz entered the room, she was dressed to go out, and asked her sister to accompany her.

"Let us be off," said Hildegard, "We have no more time to lose."

"May I go with you?" asked Hamilton.

"N—o, I rather think not," replied Hildegard.

"But he may come for us in an hour or so," said Crescenz, nodding to him with a smile.

"Tell me where I shall find you."

Crescenz coloured and hesitated. "In—in my—in the—in Major Stultz's apartments —"

"We are going to arrange the furniture," said Hildegard, closing the door.

The hour had scarcely half elapsed, when Hamilton found himself again with the two sisters; he

was without ceremony desired to make himself useful, and immediately employed in assisting to arrange a press which was to be filled with linen—afterwards the chairs and tables were moved about in all directions, the *étagère* admired, and finally they adjourned to the kitchen, where Crescenz, with amusing exultation, exhibited one by one, her culinary utensils to Hamilton, explaining their uses, and assuring him that though her mother intended to give her Walburg as servant, she was determined to cook everything herself. While she was yet speaking, old Hans came to say, she was expected home—they were to dine earlier than usual, and the hairdresser was expected before two o'clock. She became very pale, and after having dismissed him, sat down on a little wooden stool, and began to cry. Hildegarde silently made a sign to Hamilton to leave them, and greatly wondering at the sudden change, he walked back to the drawing-room.

On glancing round at the furniture which Crescenz considered so splendid, he could not help smiling at the frugality of her taste. Was he to be envied for his more lavish ideas? Assuredly not. Everything in this world, from the diamond to the first thing beyond the absolute necessities of life, is valued fictitiously. The actual worth depends on the mind of the possessor, and is re-

gulated in civilized countries by unconsciously made comparisons,—the mental effort losing itself in the result. To Crescenz, the thin white muslin curtains were quite as desirable, even on a cold day in February, as to Hamilton, the richest silk—the yellow sofa, with its hard stuffed cushions and perpendicular sides, was intended to be a seat of honor for a guest, and was not adapted for reclining—even Hamilton must have failed in discovering a posture of repose upon it, and he had a most decided talent for making himself comfortable. The six chairs had long thin legs, but the wood which had been spared on the legs had been conscientiously bestowed on the backs, which were tastefully formed to represent hearts. A table, two chests of drawers, and the *étagère* completed the furniture of the room. As Hamilton stood before the latter trying to admire the cups, saucers, glasses, and bronze candlesticks, arranged upon it and reflected in the looking glasses which for that purpose formed the back, Hildegard, and her sister entered: Crescenz, with the traces of recent tears on her face, nevertheless, looked complacently around her, for the twentieth time arranged the folds of the curtains, dusted the table with her handkerchief, and then led the way down stairs.

At five o'clock, a party of about sixteen or

eighteen persons, assembled in the private chapel of the Frauen church to witness the marriage of Major Stultz and Crescenz Rosenberg. The bride shed no tears, she looked very pretty and very shy—the bridegroom rather stouter and redder than usual. Madame Rosenberg openly expressed her satisfaction, and hoped the day was not far distant, when she should be in the same place, and for the same purpose, on Hildegarde's account. Hildegarde was pale and silent, and Mr. Rosenberg alone shewed that he was endeavouring to control his emotion.

On their return home, they found the rooms lighted, and supper prepared under the superintendence of Madame Lustig. They spent three hours at table, and then they danced, and then they eat, and then they danced again until past midnight, when to conclude the festivity, punch was made. Let it not be supposed, that this was as in England, a simple mixture of water, sugar, and Cognac, or rum. In Germany, it is a complicated business, and notwithstanding the previous preparations of Madame Lustig, Madame Rosenberg and three or four matrons accompanied her to the kitchen to assist in the brewing. Each had a different receipt—and a separation of the parties became absolutely necessary, as one proposed using black, another green tea, for the

mixture, while the others were for rice water or wine. Hamilton, who had become a sort of authority in the house on all subjects, was consulted, but on his venturing to suggest pure water, Madame Rosenberg laughingly, pushed him towards the drawing-room, saying, it was evident he knew nothing about the matter,—he might dance until the punch was ready!

Most excellent it proved to be, however concocted, when at length Madame Rosenberg appeared with a soup-tureen full, and dispensed it ladlewise to the surrounding company, who then crowded round Major Stultz and Crescenz, in order to clink their glasses, and partake of a colossal sponge cake which the latter distributed in ample portions.

A short time afterwards, old Hans announced, "The carriage for Miss Crescenz," and she retired with evident reluctance to put on her shawl. The whole company prepared to leave at the same time, and were soon all together in the corridor. Crescenz embraced her stepmother, and somewhat formally thanked her for her kindness and generosity. She held out her hand to Hamilton, and then threw herself into her sister's arms and burst into tears. "Come, come, Crescenz," cried her father, with an attempt at gaiety he was far from feeling; "this will never do—you are taking

leave as if seas and not streets were to separate us. Come," and he drew her arm within his, and led her down stairs. The others followed, all but Hildegarde, and after a moment's hesitation, Hamilton. They returned to the deserted drawing-room, where Hildegarde threw open the window, and leaned out.

They soon heard Crescenz' voice saying cheerfully, "Good night Lina,—good night Papa,—good night Hildegarde."

"Good night," answered her sister from the window, and the carriage drove off.

"Well, have we not spent a merry evening!" cried Madame Rosenberg, triumphantly, as she almost breathlessly entered the room a few minutes afterwards. "This has been a gay wedding after all, you see Franz."

"It has," he answered, sinking dejectedly on the sofa; "I am quite provoked with myself for feeling so low spirited. I believe I am not well."

"Ah, bah," cried his wife, laughing, "if you had been ill, you could not have supped as you have done. Perhaps, however, you have eaten too much fish, or turkey, or ham? At all events I am sure you are tired and sleepy, so you may go to bed, while we put everything in order again."

Mr. Rosenberg, as usual, followed his wife's advice without contradiction. He held Hamilton's hand for a moment, as if he intended to say something more than the good night, which was scarcely audible.

CHAPTER VI.

A CHANGE.

HAMILTON was wakened about three o'clock in the morning by Hildegarde rushing into his room, and exclaiming, "For Heaven's sake get up—get up and come to my father—I am afraid he has got the cholera. You have seen people ill, and know the symptoms. Oh, come—we do not know what to do!"

"Send for the doctor," cried Hamilton, "I shall be with you in a moment."

On entering Mr. Rosenberg's room, Hamilton found Hildegarde standing beside his bed, while Madame Rosenberg was walking up and down the room, gesticulating like a person in a state of mental derangement.

"Oh, Mr. Hamilton," she exclaimed, the

moment she perceived him; "Tell me, only tell me that Franz has not got the cholera, and I shall be grateful as long as I live! It would be too hard were he to have it now when people say there is nothing more to fear. Last week, only one man—quite a decrepit old man, died of it! I am sure Franz has only eaten too much supper yesterday evening. Don't you think so? Say that he has not got the cholera, and I shall believe you implicitly."

But Hamilton could not say so, nor unfortunately Doctor Berger either; the case was at once pronounced a bad one, and, in a fearfully short time, quite hopeless. Consternation and dismay pervaded the whole household, when on the morning of the third day, poor Mr. Rosenberg was no more. Completely overpowered by the suddenness of her own bereavement, Madame Rosenberg retired to her room, unable to speak to any one.

Major Stultz immediately undertook the necessary arrangements for the funeral, and gave directions for the printing of circular letters to announce the death to distant relations and friends, a custom which saves the mourning family the performance of a most painful duty. Hamilton took the two little boys to their sister Crescenz. Her married life had begun in anxiety and sorrow, and Hamil-

ton felt some natural trepidation at seeing her again, under such painful circumstances ; but her grief was of the most tranquil description, the tears flowed unrestrainedly over her round rosy cheeks, and when they ceased, left not a trace behind. Although but a few days had elapsed since she had left her family, a not quite willing bride, she had already begun to repeat her husband's words as oracles. Hamilton half smiled as he heard her "Thank goodness, that she at least was provided for, and had a home ! She hoped poor dear Hildegarde would not now begin to repent having refused such a man as Major Stultz, the more so, as that refusal precluded the possibility of her ever residing with them !"

Poor Hildegarde ! She had not bestowed one thought, much less a regret, on Major Stultz. Hamilton, on his return, found her sitting in her room, perfectly motionless, with parched lips, and eyes devoid of tears. He hoped she had at length begun to think of herself, recommended her to try to eat something and to go to bed. She looked at him, as if his words had not conveyed the slightest sense to her mind—walked uneasily up and down the room for a few minutes, and then said, with a shudder, "I am so afraid of his being buried alive ! Do you think he was quite—quite dead ? If I could only see him once more !"

"And who would be so cruel as to prevent you?" exclaimed Hamilton. "If it be any relief to your mind, I will remain in his room to-night!"

"In his room!" she cried, clasping her hands convulsively; "he is no longer there—they have taken him away to the dead-house——".

"The dead-house! Where is that?"

"In the burying-ground. They have watchers there, I believe, but still he is among all the frightful corpses, and should he come to himself—imagine how horrible! You will go with me—you will let me see him once more? I cannot else believe that he is really dead!"

"I will go with you there, or any where you please," said Hamilton, completely overcome by her evident wretchedness.

The weather was unusually inclement; a storm of falling sleet almost blinded them as they waded through the half melted snow which lay on the road outside the town; but Hildegard seemed unconscious of all these impediments, and hurried on silently until she reached the churchyard, where she turned to a building, which had escaped Hamilton's observation on a former occasion, and walked directly up to a row of glass doors, and stood as if transfixed with horror. Hamilton was in a moment at her side, and it must be confessed

that to those who were not inured to the various aspects of death, the scene which presented itself was shocking in the extreme. On tables in the interior, a long row of open coffins were arranged, their ghastly tenants dressed with a care that seemed to mock the solemnity of death and interment. A young officer was in his uniform, as if about to appear on parade;—an elderly gentleman dressed for a ball;—a young girl, whose half open mouth and eyes showed the struggle with which soul and body had parted, was crowned with flowers, and a long white veil lay in light folds over her bare arms and white dress, reaching almost to the satin shoes which covered the stiff cold feet as they protruded beyond the coffin in hideous rigidity. Mr. Rosenberg was now scarcely recognisable—his livid features were contracted, and not a trace remained of that beauty for which he had been so remarkable. Hamilton turned away, but again his eyes encountered death. Another and lighter room was filled with the corpses of poorer persons and children; the latter indeed seemed to sleep, and on them the wreaths of flowers did not appear misplaced.

Hildegarde seemed unable to tear herself from the spot, nor did Hamilton feel disposed to disturb her, until he perceived a number of persons hurrying to and fro, and torches glimmering in

the churchyard; he then asked a woman who appeared with a bunch of keys in her hand, if there was to be a funeral.

"I believe the Countess Raimund is to be buried this evening," she answered.

"Not one of these?" cried Hamilton, pointing to the place where Hildegard stood.

"Yes; just there beside the gentleman who died of cholera—that old lady in black satin with her mouth wide open—it was shameful negligence of those about her not to close it before the jaw stiffened!"

"Hildegard," said Hamilton, drawing her arm within his; "you must now leave this place. There is to be a funeral."

"I know—I heard," she said, allowing herself to be led away, with her head still turned towards the chamber of death. "The only precedence which the Countess Raimund can now claim of my father," she added, bitterly, "is that of first descending into the grave! How absurd all pride appears when standing at the threshold of a charnel-house!"

"Very true," said Hamilton, "but how seldom the proud—how seldom any one thinks of such a place. Where are you going now?"

"To my mother's grave."

He made no opposition, for he hoped that some

sudden recollection would put an end to the unnatural calmness of her manner, and was, for this reason, not sorry to perceive that the gravedigger had already been at work; the place was measured, and some shovels full of earth had been thrown over the grave she came to visit.

She seemed for a few minutes to pray, and then sat down beside the stone cross, and begun assiduously to arrange the leaves of the still green, though withered, ivy wreaths which she had placed on it in November.

"I am trying your patience unpardonably," she observed at length, rising from her cheerless occupation; "and it is all to no purpose."

"What do you mean?" asked Hamilton.

"I expected to feel something like sorrow for my father's loss. You will be shocked when I tell you that I cannot feel anything resembling it. Before I came here, I thought my odious apathy was caused by doubts of the reality of his death—those doubts are all removed—I know that he is dead—that in a few hours he will be in the grave, and moulder beside my mother's skeleton—and I do not, cannot feel anything like grief!"

"You are too much stunned by the suddenness," began Hamilton.

"Not so," said Hildegard, quietly, "I assure you I never felt more perfectly contented than at

this moment ; were it not, that I shudder at my total want of sensibility."

"If it be insensibility?" said Hamilton, "but you have so much decision, so much firmness of character, that ——"

"No, no;" she cried, hastily interrupting him ; "this is not firmness. Do not imagine that I feel emotion which I am endeavouring to conceal, or suppressing tears ready to flow, I only feel an almost irresistible inclination to walk or run without stopping !"

"I am surprised that you do not find yourself completely exhausted," said Hamilton. "It would certainly be more natural, when one takes into consideration that you have not slept for three nights, or eaten anything for nearly two days !"

"And you also have passed three sleepless nights," said Hildegarde, "and without the hopes and fears, which made the want of rest imperceptible to me. I ought to have remembered that sooner."

"I was not thinking of myself," cried Hamilton. "And your hopes and fears," he added, in a lower voice, "I have most truly participated. Will you never believe that your joys are my joys, your sorrows my sorrows !"

He waited in vain for an answer, Hildegarde

leaned heavily on his arm and breathed quickly, he at length caught a glimpse of her face, and was so shocked at the convulsive workings of her features, that he beckoned to one of the numerous hackney coachmen returning from the churchyard, and silently placed his unresisting companion in the carriage. She sighed so deeply, and then gasped so fearfully for breath, that he let down all the windows, and experienced the most heartfelt pleasure, when at length she burst into a passion of tears.

She wept unrestrainedly until they reached home, but, even on the stairs as they ascended, Hamilton perceived a return of her former unnaturally composed manner.

During the next day, Madame Rosenberg was almost constantly surrounded by her friends and acquaintance. Towards evening, Crescenz drew her sister aside, and whispered, "Oh, my dear Hildegarde, this is an irreparable loss for you!"

"Irreparable indeed!" said Hildegarde, moving her head dejectedly; "I wish it had pleased God to let me die instead of my father—few would have mourned for me!"

"I'm sure dear, I don't know what is to become of you now! I can't bear to think of it, but I suppose you will have to apply to Mademoiselle Hortense to get you a situation as governess; you

know she promised to do so whenever you wished it ——”

“I know,” said Hildegarde, rubbing her forehead with her hand, and biting her underlip with an expression of great distress, “Let us talk about that some other time—I cannot *think* yet.”

“It was Lina Berger who talked about it, she said she was sure that Mamma would not propose your remaining with her, and Major Stultz says that ——”

“Crescenz,” said Hildegarde, with some impatience, “say what you please to me from yourself, I am ready to hear you, but do not torture me now with the opinions of either Lina Berger or Major Stultz.”

“Well, to be sure! And how often have you said that you considered him a sensible man!”

“I have not changed my opinion, but as I know he can feel no sort of interest in anything that concerns me, I do not wish to hear what he has said.”

“Ah, I see, Mr. Hamilton has been telling you—he smiled so strangely when I was speaking to him yesterday, that I was sure he would tell you everything—I indeed wished to have had you with me directly; it was my first thought, but Blasius said that what occurred at—at Seon—you know, made it quite impossible!”

"Mr. Hamilton told me nothing of all this," said Hildegarde, "I thank you for your kind intentions, dear Crescenz, I can imagine that Major Stultz's refusal to comply with your wishes has pained you; but you may set your mind at rest, for I feel even more intensely than he can, the impossibility of my ever becoming an inmate of his house."

"Well," said Crescenz, apparently greatly relieved; "I'm sure I am glad to hear you say so—for though he talked very sensibly, and all that, this morning, I could not help crying, and was quite uncomfortable at the idea of speaking to you about it; I was afraid you might think, that now I am married, I love you less."

"Four days is too short a time to work such a change, I hope," said Hildegarde, with a melancholy smile; then, suddenly seizing her sister's hands, she exclaimed "Oh, Crescenz, love me! Love me still—as much as you can—think how I shall miss my father's affection!"

"Very true, indeed," as Blasius says, "my father bestowed his whole affection on you, and quite overlooked me!"

Hildegarde gazed at her sister for a moment in silence, and then turned away with tearful eyes. She saw that Crescenz would soon be lost to her for ever. Major Stultz already directed her

thoughts and words, as completely as she herself had done when they were at school together. She watched her returning to their stepmother's room, and then walked slowly towards the door leading to the passage. Hamilton was standing at the stove—had heard the sisters' conversation, and filled with compassion for her deserted position, he seized her hand as she passed, and passionately pressed it to his lips without speaking. When she raised her heavy eyelids to look at him, she saw that his eyes were suffused with tears.

“I—thank you—for your sympathy,” she murmured with trembling lips, as she withdrew her hand, and hurried out of the room.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARRANGEMENT.

AFTER the interment of Mr. Rosenberg, some time passed over in melancholy monotony. Madame Rosenberg employed herself principally with the inspection and arrangement of papers; Hildegarde wandered about the house, endeavouring in an absent manner to make herself useful. She even tried to assist the new cook, but her efforts were so completely unsuccessful, that her mother begged she would desist, as she had no sort of talent in that line.

Mr. Rosenberg had been a kind husband and an affectionate father; Hamilton had invariably found him an agreeable companion, but his constant occupation in his office, and an inveterate habit of going out every evening, had made his society an

occurrence of such rarity, that Hamilton in a short time became quite resigned to his loss; in fact, but for the mourning dresses, Hildegarde's unconquerable dejection, and the never-failing tears of Madame Rosenberg, as she circumstantially related to every visitor the history of her husband's illness and death, he would soon have forgotten that he had ever existed. He attended the College lectures, studied German with his friend Biedermann, rode, walked, in short continued all his former occupations with the exception of his quarrels with Hildegarde—these had now entirely ceased; he obeyed her slightest directions, anticipated her wishes with a sort of quiet devotion so completely directed to her alone, but so unobtrusive, that Madame Rosenberg failed to observe more than that they had learned to live peaceably in the same house together, and praised them both more than once for having ceased their silly and useless quarrels.

One day about the beginning of April, Hildegarde recalled him just as he was about to leave the house, saying that her mother wished to speak to him; he laughingly demanded if the probably not very important communication could not be deferred to another day, as he had promised to meet some friends at Tambosi's in the Hofgarten. Hildegarde gravely shook her head,

and said she believed her mother was waiting for him.

"What a bore!" he exclaimed, striding along the passage; "I suppose I shall be detained half an hour to hear a lecture about having forgotten to extinguish the candles last night, or having burnt my boots on the stove! I really wish Hildegarde you would give your new cook instructions about my room—it is not at all necessary, that your mother should be informed every time an accident occurs there."

Madame Rosenberg was sitting at an old-fashioned scrutoire furnished with innumerable diminutive, secret, and apparent drawers; she had a small packet of bills beside her, and various heaps of money before her. When Hamilton entered, she immediately moved back her chair, and pointed to another beside her, which she wished him to occupy. Now Hamilton had already become a little spoiled by Madame Rosenberg's indulgence, praises, and deference to his opinion, he had learned to like her and even overlook her vulgarity; but in proportion as his affection had increased, his respect had decreased, and like the spoiled son of a weak mother, he now stood leaning against the door, refusing with an impatient gesture the offered chair, and murmur-

ing some unintelligible words about business and appointments.

"I shall not detain you long," said Madame Rosenberg, drawing out of her pocket an enormous linen handkerchief, and wiping away two large tears, which were obtrusively rolling down her cheeks, "I ought to have spoken to you long ago, but I have been thinking over and over the means of rendering my communication less disagreeable."

"So," cried Hamilton closing the door, and advancing towards her, "so it is not about the boots you are going to lecture me?"

"No ;" she replied, half laughing, "though I must say ——"

"I know all you are going to say," cried Hamilton laughing, "extravagant habits, horrible smell, danger of burning the house, and all that ! Suppose it said—I am very contrite indeed, and promise not to burn either shirt or boots for three weeks to come, and not at all when the weather is warmer and the stove is not heated."

"In three weeks, and when the weather is warmer, we shall be too far apart for me either to lecture or detain you in my room against your will !"

"My dear Madame Rosenberg," exclaimed Hamilton, springing towards her, and not only seating

himself on the previously disdained chair, but drawing it so close to her's that she involuntarily drew back: "my dear Madame Rosenberg, you surely do not mean that I must leave you?"

"I do, indeed," she answered, nodding her head slowly and despondingly, and again the monstrous handkerchief was put in requisition. "I'm sure," she added, somewhat surprised at the varying emotions depicted on his countenance; "I'm sure it's very kind of you to be so sorry to leave us—I thought the loss was wholly on our side."

"I have spent seven of the happiest months of my life in your house," began Hamilton.

"Six months and one week," said Madame Rosenberg, interrupting him, "You were three weeks at Havard's, you know, and when we are settling our account, the three weeks must be deducted, for, as poor dear Franz said——"

"I should like to know your intentions with respect to Hildegarde," said Hamilton, who had not heard one word of the explanation.

"Hildegarde goes with me to the Iron Works as people now call them; poor Franz was so uneasy about her on his deathbed, that I promised him she should never leave my house, excepting with her own free will, and always have the power of returning to it when she chose, and that she

should receive on her marriage a trousseau in every respect like her sister's."

"This promise must have been a great relief to his mind," observed Hamilton.

"It was," said Madame Rosenberg, and the tears flowed fast as she added, "I would have given him everything I have in the world, to have made him contented in his last moments. We lived so happily together during the 'twelve years which we passed in this house. I cannot remain here any longer,—the house—the furniture—Munich itself has become odious to me. I intend to return to my father. Fritz will be made a gentleman, as his father wished it, at the military school. Gustle must be his grandfather's successor at the Iron Works, he has at all events, no great love of learning, and Peppy is too young to be taken into consideration at present."

"Take *me* with you to the Iron Works," said Hamilton, abruptly.

Madame Rosenberg looked at him as if she did not quite comprehend.

"Take me with you to the Iron works," he repeated.

She shook her head. "It is no place for you," she said, steadily, "nor is my father, though an excellent man, a companion for you. Your parents would be dissatisfied, and with reason,

were you to bury yourself in an insignificant village, just so many miles from Munich as to prevent your being able to avail yourself of the advantages, which you told me you had found here, for the completion of your education."

Hamilton felt the justness of her remark, and did not attempt to contradict it; he had, however, no intention of quitting a family of which Hildegard was still to be a member; nor did he much concern himself about the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of his parents just at that moment. He understood Madame Rosenberg perfectly, and changed his tactics. Throwing himself back in his chair, he said, with apparent resignation, "well, I suppose I must spend the ensuing five months at Havard's, that's all!"

"At Havard's! What an idea!" exclaimed Madame Rosenberg, "to be giving suppers and drinking champagne every night! I never heard of anything so absurd."

"Why, where else can I go? I cannot well take a lodging and engage a cook and housemaid for myself, can I?"

"No;" replied Madame Rosenberg, half laughing; "not exactly that—but a lodging, or a family might be found. Suppose for instance that Madame Berger should have proposed taking you, in case the Doctor have no objection, eh?"

"I am sure I have none," said Hamilton, vainly endeavouring to suppress a smile as he added, "She is one of the prettiest little women I ever saw, and with time and opportunity I have no doubt I shall fall desperately in love with her. You will not be there to sustain me with your good advice—and—a—but at least you will be answerable for the consequences, as you will have led me into temptation!"

"Good heavens! Not for all the world would I take such a responsibility on me!" cried Madame Rosenberg, with a look of amazement; "Lina, too, so giddy and thoughtless, and the Doctor never at home! It would never do I see. But who would have imagined that you would think of such a thing at your age!"

"I am just at the age to act more from impulse than reason, and I consider you too much my friend, not to speak candidly to you. If Major Stultz were not so insufferably jealous, you could make me over to Crescenz,—my regard for her is really of the most blameless description, and will never be otherwise."

"Oh, the Major would never listen to such a proposal."

"Then I have no alternative but Havard's—Havard's or your house," he continued, taking her large hard hand and pressing it fervently;

"dear Madame Rosenberg, let me go with you, I have a sort of presentiment that it is the only means of keeping me out of mischief; besides I can ride or drive into Munich two or three times a week."

"But I have no room for you," she cried, with a look of distress; for the earnestness of his manner had begun to move her.

"You must make room for me," urged Hamilton.

"And as to your horses and Hans ——"

"Oh, I can easily find quarters for them in the neighbourhood."

"You will have to sleep in a room without a stove ——"

"I don't want a stove in summer."

"Well then," she said, hesitatingly, "if you think that you can be satisfied with the accommodation which I have at my disposal, you may accompany us to the country. Should our manner of living, or what I fear more, my father, not suit you; you can leave us you know; we will part friends at all events."

"Don't talk or think of parting," cried Hamilton, gaily. "I am sure I shall find your father a most worthy person—we shall get on famously together. When do you leave? It will be quite delightful to breathe the country air. I assure you I feel already impatient to be off."

"On the 24th I purpose leaving Munich," said Madame Rosenberg, once more drawing her chair towards her scrutoire, and beginning to count her little heaps of money.

"Are those Iron Works romantically situated?" asked Hamilton.

"N—o. They are on the high road at the end of the village; but there is a fine old oak wood quite close to us."

"Ah; an oak wood," repeated Hamilton, thoughtfully.

"We have also a garden and orchard behind the house; the smoke from the forge indeed spoils the flowers greatly, but there is an arbour under the trees where we can breakfast, and drink coffee after dinner in summer—the arbour is quite covered with roses and honeysuckles."

"Ah, that is delightful!" cried Hamilton, in vision imagining himself sitting with Hildegarde in the rose and honeysuckle arbour.

"But you are forgetting your appointment," observed Madame Rosenberg, who had been in vain endeavouring to correct a fault in her reckoning.

"A civil way of telling me to leave you in peace," said Hamilton, laughing.

"Not at all, I assure you. If you have really no appointment, I shall be glad to talk over my plans with you."

"I *had* an appointment," he said, looking at his watch, "for which I am too late. I have another, for which I am a few minutes too early."

"A few minutes," repeated Madame Rosenberg. "That will never do for me. In your 'few minutes' I can only inform you that you must go for a few days at least to Havard's, until I have got everything in order. Hildegarde and the children I intend to pack off the day after tomorrow."

"Oh, pack me off, too, with Hil ——— with the children," cried Hamilton, eagerly. "I wish you would consider me really as one of them."

"Well, I am sure I have always done so since you have been with me. Poor Franz often said I took great liberties with you."

"I cannot remember anything of the kind."

"Why, have you forgotten the Sunday Fritz broke the window in the drawing-room, when you were teaching him to box?"

"I remember you boxed his ears, poor fellow, which he certainly did not deserve, as he was not really the cause of the mischief. It was I who pushed him against the window, and, if I recollect right, both Mr. Rosenberg and I protested——"

"Yes, you protested, and that made me still more angry; but, if you don't remember what I

said to you, so much the better. Franz said he believed you never heard it, as you were laughing with Madame Berger, and I was afterwards very sorry for having said so much, especially about the rough English plays."

Hamilton smiled. "I suppose," he said, turning towards the door, "Hans may pack up my chattels; you will send me to the country with the children."

"No, no, no," cried Madame Rosenberg, hastily, "that will never do; I must write to my father and explain. If he knew the sort of person you are—he would never consent to your becoming an inmate of his house!"

"Am I, then, so very disagreeable?" asked Hamilton.

"Quite the contrary—but you do not understand my father. In short, it is better to tell you at once—why should I be ashamed to say it? He was a common journeyman smith—so extremely industrious, of such enormous strength, and with so much talent for mechanics, that he made himself not only useful, but altogether indispensable to my grandfather, who, rather than lose him, gave him his daughter in marriage. Our forge became in time an Iron Work, and he is now the richest man far and wide. To see him, you would not suppose so; he is neither changed in

manner nor dress——” Madame Rosenberg paused.

“Well?” said Hamilton.

“Well!” she repeated, a little impatiently. “It is plain enough, I think, that such a man will not suit you—or you suit him.”

“I don’t know that,” said Hamilton. “A man who has turned a forge into an Iron Work, and who, from having nothing, has become rich by honest means, must be possessed of good sense and good talents too. As to his appearance or dress—a man’s coat——”

“That’s just what I am afraid of,” cried Madame Rosenberg.

“Do you think I attach such importance to a coat? I assure you that I am determined to like your father with and without a coat.”

“I will write him *that*, and it will at once put an end to our difficulties, for if I say *that* he will never imagine you are so fastidious——”

“I don’t quite understand——” said Hamilton, with a puzzled air.

“It would never do—you see—were we to inconvenience him,” said Madame Rosenberg, “or force him to change his mode of life. He likes to work and dine in his shirt sleeves, and is not over particular how his meals are served—this I can change perhaps, but against the shirt sleeves I can

do nothing, and I know it is very vulgar ; Franz told me so often enough."

"I have no sort of objection to his shirt sleeves," said Hamilton, "provided he allow me to wear a coat. What matter! If this be the only reason why I should not go with Hildegarde and the children the day after to-morrow, I think you may waive all ceremony and tell your father that I belong to the family. You have made an agreement to keep me for six months longer."

"That is a good idea," said Madame Rosenberg, laughing. "I will write to him to-morrow, and I dare say I shall have an answer in a day or two."

Hamilton perceived he had gained every concession he could reasonably demand, and left the room quietly and thoughtfully.

Hildegarde had prepared her brothers for their afternoon walk, and was waiting with some indications of impatience for his appearance. He had been forbidden to walk with her, but had established a sort of right to be informed where she intended to go—that he should ride near her, or at least become visible during her walk, was a sort of tacit agreement.

"The Nymphenburg road," cried Gustle, springing towards him. "May I have one of your canes?"

"And may I too have one to ride upon?" asked Peppy.

"Yes," said Hamilton, "Hildegarde will shew you those you may take."

"Oh come, Hildegarde," cried Gustle, pulling her rather roughly; "come and choose the canes for us. I must have the little black one with the horse's head on it."

But Hildegarde shewed no inclination to move. "You were a long time in my mother's room," she said at length, with some embarrassment.

"Not longer than was necessary to make her consent to take me with her to the country. Oh Hildegarde, what pleasant walks we shall have in the oak wood, and how much happier we shall be there than here! Were you ever at these Iron Works?"

"Not since I was a child," answered Hildegarde, smiling as she had not smiled since her father's death; "I remember the noise of the hammers was incessant, and the house shook a good deal, and the white window curtains were very soon soiled."

"We shall get used to the hammers I dare say," said Hamilton, laughing. "As to the house shaking, that must be imagination, and the window curtains can be easily changed, you know."

"But Mamma said nothing in the world would induce her to take you with us. How did you persuade her?"

"I can tell you all that when I return home. Excuse me as well as you can, should I be late for supper. Good bye."

"Where are you going?" asked Hildegard.

He whispered a few words, and then hurried down stairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIFFICULTY REMOVED.

It was late in the evening, and Hamilton had not yet returned. Madame Rosenberg began to get a little uneasy, and very impatient, when fortunately Madame Berger arrived to complain bitterly of her husband, who had declined receiving Mr. Hamilton as an inmate of his house on any terms. "He says I am too young—and he is too often absent—and people might talk! Did you ever hear anything so absurd?"

"I believe he is right," said Madame Rosenberg, "you are too young ——"

"I wonder it never occurred to you that your step-daughters were still younger!" cried Madame Berger, glancing towards Hildegarde, who was sitting at the window, looking into the street.

"The case is quite different," said Madame Rosenberg, "we are a large family, and where a father and mother are in a house ——"

"Pshaw!" cried Madame Berger, impatiently; "Cressy liked him for all that, better than she will ever like her husband, I suspect!"

"Who told you that?" cried Madame Rosenberg, with a look of amazement.

"My own eyes," replied Madame Berger, with a slight laugh; "and not Hildegarde," she added, in answer to a look of suspicion, which Madame Rosenberg had cast on her step-daughter. "Believe me, neither the presence of father nor mother can prevent these things."

"Crescenz is most happily married," began Madame Rosenberg.

"So am I—but I preferred Theodore Biedermann to the Doctor, as you well know. You need not look so astonished at hearing me speak the truth, Hildegarde. I vow one would almost imagine you heard this for the first time! As if Cressy had not betrayed me long ago, not to mention Mademoiselle Hortense, who of course used me as a scarecrow for the whole school! Excepting perhaps, the dear, good old Doctor," she continued, "there is not one of my friends or acquaintance, who does not know that I nearly cried my eyes out about Theodore."

"And is it possible you have not told Dr. Berger?" cried Hildegarde, turning quickly round. "Did you not feel bound in honour ——"

"No Mademoiselle," replied Madame Berger, sharply; "I did not feel myself bound in honour deliberately to destroy my domestic peace,—I leave it to you to make such a confession when you are going to be married, if you think it necessary!"

"I am afraid Hildegarde is not likely to be married at all, now that we are going to live at the Iron Works," sighed Madame Rosenberg. "The only neighbour we have is the *Förster*, and he ——"

"Lord bless you!" cried Madame Berger, "Hildegarde would never look at a *förster* if he were not by chance a count or baron. Had Mr. Hamilton been a *Milor*, she would never have thought of quarrelling with him, I can tell you!"

"Caroline!—Madame!" exclaimed Hildegarde, with a vehemence that made Madame Berger retreat a few steps from the window, while she cried, with affected fear, "Good heavens! I had no idea you could get into a passion about *him*! And here he is," she added, springing again to the window, as she heard the sound of a horse's hoofs on the pavement; "here he is, and I suspect there are few *Milors* to be compared to him; he

certainly is the handsomest creature I ever saw! An ideal of an Englishman! *Un amour!*"

"Lina," said Madame Rosenberg, reproachfully, "you must forgive my observing that this language is not proper for a young married woman."

"Ah bah, as if I were serious! Have you forgotten that you used to say I always spoke without thinking? Now Hildegarde there, thinks without speaking perhaps!"

"Not of Mr. Hamilton," said Madame Rosenberg, "for she did not even look out of the window at your *amour*, or whatever you called him. Hildegarde, go and tell him we have waited nearly two hours for him, that supper is ready, and that I beg he will come just as he is, and not make an evening toilet for once in a way."

She had not time to deliver her message, for Hamilton entered the room with unusual precipitation, and handed Madame Rosenberg an enormous, ill-folded, large-wafered letter.

"From my father!" she exclaimed, with surprise.

"Yes; he has no sort of objection to my accompanying you to the Iron Works, he says you may take me instead of Fritz."

"A good idea," cried Madame Berger, as she came from behind the window curtain; "it is however, Mr. Hamilton's, and not your father's."

"It is in the letter, however," said Madame Rosenberg, eagerly perusing the inelegant specimen of penmanship; "but I do not see anything about Hans or the horses."

"Oh, I said nothing about them, they can go to the inn."

"But we have a stable ——" began Madame Rosenberg.

"I know you have, and a pair of stout greys in it. Your father has promised me a lift into Munich every Saturday, when he sends in his iron."

"On the cart?" asked Madame Berger.

"Yes;" said Hamilton, "there are places for two on the seat in front. The offer was very civil, considering the shortness of our acquaintance."

"It is a proof at all events that he has taken a great fancy to you," said Madame Rosenberg, with an air of great satisfaction; "and as you wish to go with the children, Hildegard must arrange your room for you. Do you hear Hildegard?"

"Yes, Mamma."

"I must give you a green curtain to hang up before the alcove where the bedstead is to be put, and it will be nearly as good as two rooms. You

must make new muslin curtains for the windows as soon as possible."

"Your grandfather made most particular enquiries about you," observed Hamilton, turning to Hildegarde.

"He is not *my* grandfather, he is no relation whatever of mine," she answered in French, while her colour heightened rapidly, and seemed to be reflected in Hamilton's face, which became crimson.

"I don't understand French," said Madame Rosenberg, looking at them alternately; "but I think I can guess; however, it is no matter,—read this letter, Hildegarde, in it you will find everything, and more than you could have heard from Mr. Hamilton. My father is willing to act towards you as a relation,—do not, by an ill-timed exhibition of pride, turn his kindly feelings towards you into dislike."

She received the letter, and the not undeserved rebuke in silence; while Hamilton, to divert Madame Berger's attention, began a description of his meeting with Mr. Eisenmann, of their discourse, and supper.

"It must have been delicious, the whole scene," cried Madame Berger, "I shall pay you a visit at the Iron Works, the very first day the Doctor can let me have the horses."

"Pray bring the Doctor with you when you come," said Madame Rosenberg, unconsciously glancing towards Hamilton.

Madame Berger saw the glance, observed that Hamilton laughed, and immediately enquired the cause. Madame Rosenberg refused to tell her, and she appealed to Hamilton, who immediately, with the most perfect composure, and without the slightest reserve, repeated all the part of their morning conversation which related to her. She seemed to enjoy the recital, and Madame Rosenberg's face of horror, equally. "One thing is certain," she said, when he had ended, "had you been so many months in the same house with me, as you have been with Hildegard, we should have ——"

"You seem altogether to forget the Doctor," said Madame Rosenberg, interrupting her, almost angrily.

"To tell the truth, I sometimes do forget that I am married,—but Mr. Hamilton understands *badinage* perfectly, so you need not look so shocked at my *bavardage*."

"I wish you would speak German," said Madame Rosenberg, fidgetting on her chair; "you use so many French words, that I cannot understand the half of what you say."

"I believe I had better go home," cried Madam

Berger, good humouredly, "allow me to hope you will be civiller to me when I visit you in the country! Bon soir."

"Good night," said Madame Rosenberg, drily, without making the slightest effort to detain her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE IRON WORKS.

IN a few days, Hildegarde, the children, and Hamilton, were established at the Iron Works; her recollections proved tolerably correct, the noise of the hammers was almost incessant, not even ceasing during the night, and as the house adjoined the Iron Works, it shook at times until the windows rattled. Hamilton did not much notice the white curtains, but from pure sympathy with Hildegarde, he regretted the smuts which fell flake-like in the garden, and seemed destined to rob the coming flowers of half their beauty. Old Mr. Eisenmann was not a little proud of his garden, and great was his satisfaction when he found Hildegarde willing to assist him in cultivating it. The plants which most interested Hamilton were

the numerous cactuses which filled all the windows in the front of the house, and whose brilliant flowers already made every passer by stop to gaze at them. Nothing could equal the old man's delight on such occasions; if the weather were warm enough, he generally opened the window, and related how he had managed his plants during the winter, in order to make them blow so early, and it had been Hamilton's unaffected admiration of these cactuses, as he had walked up to the house, which had formed the commencement of their acquaintance.

During the fortnight which preceded Madame Rosenberg's arrival, Hamilton enjoyed the most unrestrained intercourse with Hildegarde; he watched her making the coffee in the morning,—sat beside her at the open window looking into the garden, and accompanied her in her walks with her brothers in the oak wood; here there was a small chapel in which she daily prayed, while Hamilton, leaning against the entrance, stared absently at the votive offerings hung around, or endeavoured to decipher the old German prayers, and texts of Scripture, with which their inhuman illustrations were pasted on the walls. The two boys generally scampered about, but joined them when they sat down on one of the numerous benches under the trees. Hamilton

usually held a book in his hand, out of which he sometimes read a few lines, especially when any obtrusive wanderers made their appearance, though on week days, pilgrims to the little chapel, who afterwards came to beg a few kreutzers, were the only interruptors of their studies, meditations, or conversation, as the case may have been.

"I wish," he said, as they loitered through the fields on their way home, the evening before Madame Rosenberg's arrival, "I wish I were certain of spending the next six months as I have done the last fortnight. I cannot tell you how I have enjoyed myself,—much as I like your step-mother, and notwithstanding all her kindness and indulgence to me, I dread her coming more than I can express—everything will be changed—and any change must diminish my happiness."

"You have nothing to apprehend, but a removal of the furniture in your room," replied Hildegarde, with a quiet smile; "but I cannot expect any longer to eat the bread of idleness,—I must learn to cook, and wash, and iron!"

"You will never be able to endure such work," exclaimed Hamilton.

"I shall try it for a few months at all events. And as long as you are here," she added, frankly, "I think I can bear it, as your society and friendship will be an indemnity for most annoyances."

Hamilton's expressions of gratitude, she interrupted by continuing, "after all, what shall I do more than girls in my rank of life must always do? Even Crescenz since her marriage, has learned to iron. Did you not see her ironing Major Stultz' shirts when we went to take leave of her?"

"Yes, but he is her husband; and it was a mere ostentation of usefulness on her part, for your mother told me she need not do anything of the kind if she did not wish it. Crescenz, however, does not appear misplaced when so employed—but you ——"

"Strictly speaking, I am not more misplaced than she is. We have both received an education beyond our station in the world. I have, perhaps, profited more by the instruction bestowed on me than she has; but you must allow that *she* has shown infinitely more capacity for the necessary duties of life."

"If it be her duty to iron her husband's shirts," answered Hamilton, laughing, "I must say she performs it in the most charming manner possible. Nothing could be more coquettish than the black silk handkerchief twisted round her head to prevent her from feeling the draught of air, or the sleeves tucked up just enough to exhibit the dimples in her white arms! I must

say, Crescenz is perfectly aware of all her personal advantages !”

“And who is not aware of them ?” said Hildegarde, “or rather, who does not overrate them ?”

“You do not, most certainly !” cried Hamilton. “I am convinced you do not think ——”

“That I am handsome ?” said Hildegarde, interrupting him quietly ; “I know it perfectly well. You are shocked at my candour,” she added, after a pause, on observing that he continued silent ; “it would have been more proper to have disclaimed—but after all, what worth have regular features, when they are inanimate ? And mine are so I know.”

“You are mistaken,” said Hamilton, “I have never known any one whose features have expressed so many various emotions as yours have during the few months of our acquaintance.”

“That I have felt more, than during the whole of my previous life, is most certain,” she said, thoughtfully ; “it seems then, I have not been able to acquire that composure of mind and feature which Mademoiselle Hortense so often told me would be essentially necessary for my happiness.”

“I am rather inclined to hate that Mademoiselle Hortense without ever having seen her,” cried Hamilton, “I think she wished to make an actress of you !”

"No; she wished to make a good governess of me, as my stepmother desired her, and she saw that my pride and violence of temper, would prove serious obstacles. My gratitude to her is unbounded for all her care and attention during so many years. She is my only hope for the future too—on her I depend to find me some respectable situation, should my residence here become uncomfortable."

"Have you ever seriously thought of taking such a step?"

"I believe I have talked, more than thought on the subject. One thing I have resolved upon, and that is, to go as far as possible from home."

"Should you like to go to a foreign country?"

"Foreign, as you understand the word—no, but I am not likely to have the power of choosing. Mademoiselle Hortense's connexions are all in Alsace, and my destination will probably be Strasburg."

They walked on in silence, each absorbed in thoughts of no very agreeable description. As they drew near the house, Mr. Eisenmann came to meet them, accompanied by the *Förster*, who had begun to drop in regularly every evening, to drink a glass of beer with the old man. Hamilton greatly approved of the arrangement, as it left him at liberty to talk unreservedly in English to

Hildegarde, who, however, would have preferred his absence, from the time that Hamilton had made her observe that his eyes were fixed upon her incessantly, and followed her wherever she went.

“This is the last evening you will be my house-keeper, Hildegarde,” said Mr. Eisenmann, as she pushed his arm chair to the table, and placed his newspaper, which seemed to contain nothing but advertisements, beside the small brass lamp. “I can give you a good character, girl; you have a way with you that has made the people here obey you at once. She will make a good wife one of these days—eh, Mr. Hamilton? Eh, Förster Weidmann?”

Hildegarde smiled, and continued to perform her different evening duties. She gave her brothers their bread-and-milk, assisted the awkward maid-servant to arrange the supper table, made the salad, carved the fowl, and presented each their plate, with such quiet unobtrusiveness that her motions were only apparent by the rustling of the large bunch of keys she was to resign to her mother the next day, but which now hung glittering in steel chains at her girdle *à la châteline*.

Hamilton had been agreeably surprised at finding Mr. Eisenmann by no means so illiterate as

he had expected. On every subject relating to his trade, he was perfectly well informed, and in other respects, his opinions were those of a shrewd, intelligent man. He spent the greater part of each day at the Iron Works, his hands thrust into his pockets, a short, and very brown meerschaum pipe between his teeth, and his eyes following the movements of his workmen ; and sometimes, when provoked by their want of skill, or too dilatory movements, after a few impatient ejaculations, throwing aside his coat and working with them. In his house, too, Hamilton had now frequently seen him in his shirt sleeves, without feeling any of the horror expected by Madame Rosenberg ; in the evening, he generally mounted a black silk nightcap, and when he had finished smoking his pipe and drinking his tankard of beer, and the *Förster* had taken leave, overcome by the fatigue of early rising, and his daily exertions, he usually fell fast asleep, leaving his two companions to whisper, until the Scharzwald clock struck nine, when wakening without any apparent effort, he sent them to bed, and retired for the night himself.

This evening—this last evening as they chose to call it, the *Förster* showed no inclination to move, and his eyes now seemed to follow the motions of Hildegard's lips, as she murmured an

occasional sentence to Hamilton ; he tried in vain to join in their conversation, spoke of bringing his zither, proposed teaching them to play it if they desired, and not finding either of them disposed to appreciate either his conversational or musical talents, he turned to the now drowsy old man, whom he contrived to waken completely by some reference to the eternal "good old times."

"Pray, Hildegarde, turn away from that man," said Hamilton, bending down to her, as she sat on one of the children's low chairs beside him ; "as long as he can look at you, he finds it impossible to tear himself away,—it is absolute cruelty—he is depriving Mr. Eisenmann of his sleep this evening. Unpardonably inconsiderate !" he added, almost angrily.

Hildegarde, without an attempt at deprecation, lit a taper, and retiring to the other end of the room, where there was a thin-legged rickety table, she took from a cupboard the large house account book, a hideous leaden ink bottle, and a well worn pen, and began to add and subtract with a diligence which would have put Hamilton's temper to the proof, had not the Förster almost directly stood up to take leave ; but the old man was now quite roused, and moreover, disposed to be loquacious ; he let his visitor stand before him in the

awkward posture of a shy man, wishing to get away, and not knowing how to manage it, while he observed, "when people say the old times were good, and the present times are bad, I always feel obliged to contradict them. No offence, good Mr. Weidmann, but in my youth I have often heard just the same thing said, and in those times as in these, the greater part of mankind had to earn their bread in 'the sweat of their face.' "

"I suppose so, sir," said the Förster, trying to move, but restrained by the old man's continuing to address him. "I wish you a good night."

"All I know is," resumed Mr. Eisenmann, addressing Hamilton, "that Bavaria, of all the countries I have seen, appears to me to be the happiest. Of England I know nothing, excepting the manufacturing towns——"

"When were you there?" asked Hamilton.

"Soon after the peace—I went there on business."

"And what did you think of England? I should like to know what impression was made on you by our great manufacturing districts?"

"I saw much to admire, but nothing to make me think the English a *happier* people than the Bavarians," replied Mr. Eisenmann, with a low, satisfied laugh, "I would rather have been born a smith here than there, for besides the instructions

which I received for nothing in my childhood, I had during my youth, my Sunday and holyday pleasures, my merry dances, and my pot of beer in good company, and with good music too, of an evening—and a lot of other things of which your English workmen had not an idea when I was among them. It may be different now——”

“ I am afraid it is not,” said Hamilton, “ but surely our manufactories must have astonished you ?”

“ I should have understood very little of my business, if they had not,” replied Mr. Eisenmann. “ In this respect, England is a giantess, but like a giantess, ought to be admired at a distance, and not examined in detail.”

“ I perceive,” said Hamilton, “ that the people with whom you associated, have made an unpleasant impression on you,”

“ Perhaps so, but I am inclined to think it was a correct one. I mixed with people whose habits and mode of life are, and will ever remain, totally unknown to you—it was probably before you were born too, and may, as I said before, be quite different now—at all events it is too late to talk more about it to-night, I must look after my workmen, and then it will be time to go to bed.” He lit his candle, and walked towards an office which communicated with the Iron-Works.

"What a different person Mr. Eisenmann is from what I expected," observed Hildegarde.

"He is different from what I expected too," answered Hamilton.

"I am beginning to have quite a respect for him," she continued, "in short, to think him a remarkably clever man."

"You are always in extremes, Hildegarde—first you unnecessarily underrated, and now you over-rate him!"

"I suspect," said Hildegarde, laughing, "you are annoyed at his not thinking the English workmen happier than the Bavarian—his remarks, however, appeared to me very intelligent; he is quite willing to allow England her superiority in manufactures, though not in the felicity of her lower orders. For a person in his station in life, you must allow——"

"Yes," said Hamilton, "for a person in his station in life, I do think him unusually well informed and rational, but what I find most to admire about him is, that he has not stood still between his thirtieth and fortieth year, as most men who are not actually moving in the world do, and which I verily believe is the cause of those never ending praises of the good old times."

"He is the first person," said Hildegarde, "that I have heard actually give the present times the preference to those of his youth!"

"He has followed the changes of the world," said Hamilton, "and that is a proof of intellect, less often given than people imagine. Everybody's youth must be, I should think, more agreeable than their old age. The world is full of pleasures for youth, which by degrees, slowly but surely, even under the most fortunate circumstances, cease for the aged. Happy those, who like Mr. Eisenmann, can understand and appreciate the improvement in the world—still more happy those, who when old can find enjoyment in witnessing pleasures, they can no longer participate."

"But there are some fortunate persons who never appear to grow old," said Hildegarde.

"Oh, don't call them fortunate," cried Hamilton; "age must be felt by everybody, though by some it may be born cheerfully. Nothing is so disgusting as the affectation of youth in an old person. I consider it a positive misfortune to those who retain their youthful manners in old age! To grow old with dignity, is not so easy as people imagine—I could write a pamphlet about it——"

"Pray do," said Hildegarde, smiling, "I should like to learn to grow old—I—who have never really felt what it was to be young!"

"I am waiting to bid you good night," said

Mr. Eisenmann at the door, "This is the last time I shall go the rounds, for I mean to resign my office to my daughter to-morrow—she locked all the doors, and bolted all the windows, for many a year before she was married!"

"He has come just in time," said Hamilton, rising, "I believe I was getting very prosy."

"And I very melancholy," said Hildegard.

The old man bade them good night, and watched them gravely, as they ascended the stairs and separated on the lobby.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

MADAME Rosenberg took possession of her father's house more quietly than had been expected ; he resigned his keys and authority with a solemnity which quite subdued her, and a whole week elapsed before any extraordinary bustle was perceptible ; at the end of that time, a scrubbing and washing, and painting began, which drove the old man to the neighbouring inn, and Hamilton into Munich for some days. It was very disagreeable, but certainly the house appeared metamorphosed when it was at an end, and no complaints were heard, excepting a few faint murmurs from Mr. Eisenmann, about the vine which was trained against the front of the house, being covered with whitewash.

Hildegarde, to her infinite satisfaction, was not obliged to learn cooking—she had shewn a too decided distaste and want of talent; she became, however, a tolerably expert ironer, and it was amusing to see Hamilton sitting, day after day, beside the table covered with heaps of linen, a volume of Schiller on the philosophy of Herder in his hand, reading aloud, in order (as he explained to Madame Rosenberg) to improve his German accent, about which his family had become very anxious of late, and from which he concluded they had some hopes of placing him at one of the German courts; however, he did not feel particularly interested on that subject, nor indeed on anything that had reference to the future; he lived from day to day, reckoning the time profitably or unprofitably spent, according to its having been, or not having been, spent in Hildegarde's society; he might truly say with Proteus of Verona—

"I leave myself, my friends, and all for love.
Thou Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me;
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,
War with good counsel, set the world at nought——"

And three months passed like so many days, and three more would have followed them in blissful monotony, had not a circumstance, trivial in itself, led in its consequences, to an abrupt termination of this mode of life, or waste of life—whichever the reader may consider it.

The Munich Midsummer fair had commenced, and Madame Rosenberg, not having found time in one day to make her usual purchases, decided upon going a second; she put it off, however, until the very last, and when the morning came, was suffering so much from headache, that she was obliged to remain at home. As they had promised to dine at twelve o'clock with the Major, she thought it better to send Hildegarde and Gustle, and though at first she insisted that they were to go in their grandfather's little old carriage, she at length yielded to Hamilton's remonstrances and intreaties, and after he had passed a good half hour at her bed-room door, making promises of the most varied description, allowed them to drive with him, and be under his care during the day.

Crescenz received them as usual with childish delight; her greatest pleasure on such occasions was to astonish them with a variety of tarts and sweetmeats, and they always found it difficult to get away. On this day it was easier, for she intended to accompany them to the fair. Blasius had insisted on her buying some new muslin dresses, he was so thoughtful and so generous! In fact, they were a very merry party, for Major Stultz had ceased to be jealous; his wife now really liked him, and was more obedient than a

child; the thought of disputing his will had never entered her mind, and she appealed to him in the most infantine manner on every occasion, while, captivated by her beauty and innocence, he was invariably indulgent and generous almost to prodigality. She assured her sister, therefore, with the most perfect sincerity, as they walked together through the fair, that she considered herself the most fortunate woman in the world, that she could never have been so happy with any one as with Major Stultz—no, not even with Mr. Hamilton—Blasius had quite convinced her of that!

They loitered about nearly two hours, and Hamilton, unutterably wearied, was slowly following Hildegarde, carrying her various little parcels of ribbons and pins, until the arrival of Hans with the carriage should relieve him, when he was suddenly seized by both arms, and familiarly addressed by some persons behind him. They were two of his nearest relations, passing through Munich on their way home from Italy, and were evidently more glad to see him, than he to see them.

“Where have you been hiding yourself, Alfred? We were at your supposed lodgings, and no one could tell us anything about you! Any letters left would be called for, they said, which sounded very mysterious, as had you left for Vienna or Berlin, your letters would have been forwarded *sans façon*,

I suppose. Come, give an account of yourself. I shall be asked a thousand questions, you know, when I go home—that is, if you don't accompany us, which you might as well do, all things considered—and—uncle Jack."

No, Hamilton had no intention of returning home until the very last day of his leave of absence had expired.

"Well, as we start in a day or two, you will spend the evening with us at least?"

At this moment Hans appeared, and said, "the carriage was ready." Hamilton desired him to wait at the termination of the booths, and then turning to his companions said, with some embarrassment, "Spend the evening with you! oh, of course—but I have promised to drive home a lady who lives a little out of the town."

"Oh, there's a lady, is there——?"

"Yes: she is at present with her sister, making some purchases."

"Ah, perhaps these are also some of them?" cried one of his cousins, peeping with an affectation of extreme care into one of the parcels—"ribbons, I declare, and hairpins! ergo, young—Where is she?"

"I don't—know," replied Hamilton, looking down the row of booths, at one of which Hildgarde was standing.

"It's that tall girl with the small waist—I'm certain!"

"Well, it is that tall girl," said Hamilton, half laughing, "the sooner you let me go to take her home, the sooner I shall be back with you."

"Let him go, let him go," cried his other cousin; and Hamilton, with an impatient gesture, walked quickly on, followed at a little distance by both. He took a hasty leave of Major Stultz and Crescenz, and hurried Hildegard to the end of the fair. Just as she and her brother were seated in the phaeton, and Hamilton was taking the reins in his hand, his cousin called out, "Hollo, Alfred! you never asked where we were stopping. I think you are going to give us the slip!"

"You are at Havard's, I suppose," said Hamilton, not in the least endeavouring to correct the impatient movements of his horses.

"Yes. Wait a moment, I want to ask you a question."

Hamilton bent down, his face, by degrees, became crimson, and he glanced furtively at Hildegard, as if he feared she might have overheard the whisper; but she, quite unconscious that so many eyes were fixed upon her, was leaning back, and absently twisting her purse round her fingers.

Hamilton drove off at a furious rate, but scarcely

were they out of the town, when, throwing the reins to Hans, he stepped over the seat, and placed himself beside Hildegarde.

"I am surprised," she observed, with a smile, "that you did not remain with your friends, and send us home with Hans."

"It would have been the wisest thing I could have done: it was confoundedly stupid my not thinking of doing so. Stop!" he cried, to Hans; but directly after, sinking back on his seat, he added, "No—go on,"—and then murmured, "it is too late now. The best plan will be not to return. The less he knows, the less he can talk about."

Hildegarde bent forward. "Talk about what?" she asked.

"You cannot understand," he answered, quickly.

"No: I perceive I cannot. I have not the most remote idea whether or not you were glad to see these friends."

"They are my relations, my cousins; and that one who last spoke to me—did you observe him?"

"Not particularly."

"That is Harry Walcott, a great friend of my brother John's, the most amusing, worthless, extravagant fellow in the world. Were he to find out

where I am, he would come to the Iron Works to-morrow, establish himself at the inn, use my horses, abuse myself, laugh at your stepmother, bully Mr. Eisenmann, and for all I know, fall in love with you !”

“ Dreadful person !” cried Hildegarde, laughing.

“ As it is, he has seen enough—too much unfortunately, I think,” he continued, with increasing irritation of manner, “ I think I hear his exaggerations to my father, his insinuations when talking to my uncle ! No : he shall never know where I am—nothing shall tempt me into Munich for a fortnight at least !”

“ You think, perhaps, that your father and uncle would disapprove of your being at the Iron Works ?”

“ Think !” cried Hamilton, “ I am sure of it. My father would say I was losing my time, my uncle, that I was making a fool of myself !”

Neither of them spoke a word until they reached home, and Hamilton was remarkably thoughtful during the remainder of the evening.

The next day he was as cheerful as ever ; and having from his window seen Hildegarde walking towards the harbour with some paper and an ink-stand in her hand, he took up the book they were reading together, and followed her. She had just finished making a pen when he entered, and

throwing it on the table, she leaned forward and began, rather formally, "Mr. Hamilton——"

"Pray call me Alfred—I have long wished it, and we are quite intimate enough to admit of your doing so. I called you Hildegard the first month I was in your house."

"It is, perhaps, an English custom," she said, half inquiringly.

Hamilton did not answer. The fact was, at the commencement of their acquaintance, he had considered both Hildegard and her sister so infinitely beneath him in rank, that he had almost immediately called them by their Christian names.

"I suppose," she continued, "if I know you well enough to call you Alfred, I may venture to say——"

"You may venture to say anything you please."

"Well then—Alfred—I think the sooner you leave us—leave the Iron Works—the better."

"Do you?" he said, with a tolerably successful effort to appear unconcerned. "I suppose what I said yesterday, when I was vexed, has made you come to this conclusion."

"Yes: and though I cannot perceive that you have exactly been making a fool of yourself, I think it is very evident that you have been losing your time here."

"I wish I could lose the remainder of my life in the same way. I have been immeasurably happy lately."

"You said your cousin would exaggerate—would insinuate——"

"Did you understand what I meant, when I said that?" cried Hamilton, quickly.

"I believe I did; and I half wished you had allowed him to come here, and see that he was mistaken; he would soon have perceived that your friends have no cause for anxiety—that friendship alone exists between us."

"He would have seen no such thing, Hildegarde, at least as far as I am concerned, and that you know as well as I do. That you have limited your measure of regard for me is a proof of—of—no matter what; I am most happy that it is so." And Hamilton felt at that moment as unhappy and indignant, as he had ever done in his life.

"Do you not think," said Hildegarde, bending over the table, as she played with the pen, "do you not think it would be better to leave us before you are ordered to do so?"

"No," answered Hamilton, almost harshly.

"But," she continued, bending still lower, to conceal her heightened colour, "but suppose I were not here, would you still remain?"

"Can you doubt it?" cried Hamilton, ironi-

cally. "How could I ever willingly quit this tranquil retreat? The pastoral beauties of these grounds! The society in every way so suited to my tastes and habits! The——"

"Enough, enough!" cried Hildegarde, seizing her pen, and with burning cheeks, but steady hand, she rapidly wrote a letter, while Hamilton, standing at the entrance, watched her with an odd mixture of anger and admiration. He waited until she had signed her name, and then placing his hand on the paper, asked if the letter concerned him.

"I might easily equivocate, and say no, as you are neither directly nor indirectly mentioned in it; but that would not be the truth. The letter is to Mademoiselle Hortense. I am now quite resolved to leave——this place."

"May I read it?"

"If you insist——"

He took the letter; it was in French, short and forcibly written, as most letters are when composed under the influence of excited feelings. Hamilton's anger increased as he read; her proud determination of manner irritated him beyond measure, and, ashamed of the agitation which his trembling hands betrayed, he first crushed, and then tore it to pieces."

"My letter!" cried Hildegarde, starting up with

all her former vehemence of manner. "How dare you——" She stopped, and sat down, breathing quickly and audibly.

"You are in a passion," said Hamilton.

"I was," she replied, taking a long breath; "it over."

"Oh, no; be angry, I entreat; say—do something outrageous, or I can have no hope of forgiveness. We have changed characters; you have learned to control your anger, and have me now in your power: be merciful!"

"Rather tell me to be candid," she replied, rising; "writing that letter in your presence was an unnecessary display of self-control; I—was not as calm as I wished you to suppose me."

"Well, you certainly are the most honourable——"

"Don't praise me," she said, hastily; "I cannot listen to you when I am so dissatisfied with myself. I fancied my temper was corrected; I find it has merely not been tried."

"Your temper is a very good one," said Hamilton. "That you doubt yourself, and are on your guard, is rather an advantage than otherwise. I always have been considered so good tempered, that when I feel angry, it never occurs to me to conceal it, and the consequence is that you have seen me forget myself more than once."

Just then, Madame Rosenberg entered the garden, holding a very diminutive note in her hand. "I am come," she said, "to remind you of a promise which you made to a lady, I hope with the consent of her husband."

"I don't know any lady likely to remind me of a promise, excepting, perhaps, Madame Berger."

"Exactly; the Doctor will not be at home tomorrow, and as the weather is so fine, she proposes spending the day here."

"Well?" said Hamilton.

"Well, and Crescenz and the Major write to know if you will take them also in your phaeton, when you drive into Munich for Lina?"

"Oh, certainly," said Hamilton, laughing; "it was to Crescenz I made the offer, and it was Madame Berger who accepted it. You may remember, Hildegarde, the beginning of the month, when we all went to drink coffee at the Stultz', and had such excellent ices afterwards. I wonder, they did not say anything yesterday, when we were with them."

"I supposed," observed Madame Rosenberg, "that they saw Lina after you left; but at all events, you will go for them?"

"Yes, and at a very early hour."

"Oh, of course," she cried, nodding her head, jokingly; "that means at ten o'clock, I suppose."

"It means at five o'clock."

"Ah, bah ! as if you could get up at four !"

"I can and will. Crescenz must give me breakfast, and I hope to be out of Munich before seven for various reasons."

"The dust, perhaps !"

"Dust or dirt," said Hamilton, carelessly. "If Madame Berger cannot leave so early, we can send Hans with the carriage at a later hour ; though I would rather she would stay at home, as far as I am concerned."

"I cannot believe that," said Madame Rosenberg, "for I never saw you get on with any one as you do with her ; if I were the Doctor, I would not allow it."

"Nor I either, if I were the Doctor," said Hamilton, laughing ; "but he is not, perhaps, aware that her usual vivacity degenerates into romping when she is here, and she is much too young and much too pretty for any one to expect that I——"

"Oh, after all there is no great harm ; you only scamper about like a pair of children, but I should not like to see either Crescenz or Hildegarde doing the same."

Hamilton looked at Hildegarde : there was something in the expression of her face which made him imagine that she, perhaps, had not quite approved of the scampering about, of which her mother spoke.

"Am I to write an answer to this note?" she asked, as she took it out of Madame Rosenberg's hand.

Her mother nodded her head, and left the garden. Hildegarde wrote, and Hamilton again leaned against the entrance of the arbour, and looked in.

"Are you waiting for this letter too?" she asked, smiling.

"I was not thinking of it," he replied. "I want to know if you, at least, believe that I would rather Madame Berger did *not* come here to-morrow?"

Hildegarde began to scribble on the blotting-paper with great diligence.

"I see you do not believe me."

"I do, partly, especially if you think you must be quieter than on former occasions, now that mamma has remarked it. The fact is, I think Lina altogether to blame, and I have often admired your forbearance."

"Thank you," cried Hamilton; "I am quite satisfied now."

"Do not be quite satisfied with yourself," said Hildegarde, "for I must tell you honestly, that I am quite disposed to be unjust to Lina—more than ready to put an unkind construction on all she does or says."

"Why?" asked Hamilton, with a blush of pleasure, as a faint vision of the "green-eyed monster" approaching Hildegarde, floated before his imagination. "Why?"

"Because I dislike her. We waged war with each other for nearly ten years."

"Ah, I remember, she told me you were rival beauties at school."

"There was no rivalry on my part," said Hildegarde, quietly; "I never hesitated to acknowledge her beauty, it is of the most captivating description, and even when she is most disagreeable to me, I admire her person."

"You dislike her mind—her disposition, which is so different from yours," said Hamilton.

"I cannot tolerate her want of truth and honour; her, to me, unfathomable cunning. In one word, I despise her."

"You have been at no pains to conceal it," observed Hamilton.

"There was no necessity," said Hildegarde, beginning to fold up her note; "but," she added, "you must not let my opinion weigh with you; you know I have strong, and often unreasonable, prejudices. At all events, Lina's faults are not of a description to prevent one from passing a long summer's day very agreeably in her society."

"She is, certainly, an amusing person," said Hamilton.

"She is clever," said Hildegard, gathering up her writing materials to carry into the house; "no one can deny that she has intellect; at school, there were few to be compared to her."

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXPERIMENT.

THE morning was bright and still cool, though promising a sultry day, as Hamilton prepared to leave the Iron Works. To the astonishment of Madame Rosenberg, it was still so early, that she was obliged to wish him good morning from one of the windows, her night cap still on her head. Hildegard was standing before the horses, giving them lumps of sugar which they had learned to expect from her, and looking so fresh and beautiful that Hamilton began to grudge the few hours which civility required him to absent himself from her. Kneeling on the seat of the phaeton, he looked up towards Madame Rosenberg, and asked if it would not do just as well if he sent the carriage with Hans?

"Lina Berger will never forgive you," she answered, or rather shouted from the window.

"Dear Crescenz will expect you to breakfast," said Hildegard, pushing away the head of one of the horses which had been resting on her arm, "I am sure she has already arranged all her prettiest cups and saucers for you—don't forget to admire them."

Hamilton drove off. He found Crescenz not only waiting for him, but with her head stretched far out of the window, watching for his arrival. She ran to meet him, exclaiming, "How good-natured of you to come on so short a notice, and so early too! Blasius is not dressed—he is so lazy in the morning—he never gets up until past six! We shall not wait breakfast for him, however—Which cup do you choose?"

"I don't know," said Hamilton, thoughtfully. "This is the largest, but that is the prettiest—I think I must have both, first this, and afterwards that one."

Crescenz laughed; and between the history of her cups, and a discussion about her new half-mourning, the time passed until her husband made his appearance to eat a hearty breakfast, for he was quite as anxious as Hamilton to leave Munich early, he so very much disliked both heat and dust. They called for Madame Berger, she was

dressed in the very extreme of the fashion, and bounded lightly up to the seat beside Hamilton.

"Let me see how your horses can step out," she cried, while leaning back to offer Crescenz her little, tightly-gloved hand.

Hamilton was quite willing to gratify her, his horses ready to second him, at that early hour the road was but little encumbered by carts or carriages, and passed the few they met, the phaeton rolled with a velocity that made Madame Berger laugh so heartily, that poor Crescenz' stifled screams were for some time inaudible. At length Major Stultz spoke, "Mr. Hamilton, may I beg of you to drive a little slower—Crescenz' nerves are not in a state to bear——"

"Why, good gracious, Crescenz!" exclaimed Madame Berger, "You don't mean to say you are frightened? Mr. Hamilton drives so well that there is not the slightest danger."

"Oh no: I dare say not," said Crescenz.

"I should not be afraid," continued Madame Berger, "if it were night, and pitch dark into the bargain!"

"How very courageous!" observed Crescenz, timidly.

In the mean time, Hamilton endeavoured to "draw in his flowing reins" but

“——a generous horse

Shows most true courage when you check his course.”

His horses were no longer to be restrained, and their impatient springing and dancing alarmed Crescenz more than ever. At length, she could endure it no longer; and, when little more than half way, insisted on getting out of the phaeton; and Hamilton had the mortification of seeing her take her husband's arm, and with a look of infinite relief, begin to walk off as fast as she could.

“You always lead me into mischief of some kind or other!” cried Hamilton, provoked at Madame Berger's laugh of derision. “I shall keep out of your way as much as I can the rest of this day!”

“You will do no such thing,” she answered, saucily. “Those two fools trudging along the road there, only live for each other at present—Hildegard will not talk to me, and I have not the slightest intention of spending the day with either Madame Rosenberg, who lectures me about my duties towards the Doctor, or old Mr. Eisenmann, who talks of nothing but cactuses and iron! If you don't mean to be civil to me, turn back and leave me at home again.”

“Civil! oh, I have every intention of being civil, but I would rather avoid such scenes as we had the last day you were with us; I was obliged to explain and excuse ——”

"And who has a right to demand an explanation, I should like to know? Hildegarde, perhaps?"

"No:" answered Hamilton, colouring, "it was Madame Rosenberg who seemed to think——"

"Never mind what she thinks, we mean no harm, and I do not see why we should not amuse ourselves; but I must tell you something which I observed the last time I was with you—Hildegarde certainly does not like our being such good friends!"

"I don't think she cares."

"You don't know her as well as I do. Without particularly caring for you she may—in fact she must, have become accustomed to your attentions—for who else have you to talk to? Now any lessening of the homage one has been used to, is sure to irritate—Should you like to make her jealous?"

"Jealous!" repeated Hamilton, and he thought of what had occurred the day before in the garden. Could he in any way provoke her jealousy, he should be able perhaps to judge of the state of her feelings towards him; if, as she professed, but which he could not quite believe, friendship was really all she felt for him, why then, the magnanimous plans, the colossal sacrifices he had lately so often meditated, would be thrown away; and he

might after all share the fate of Zedwitz. Here was an opportunity of making the trial, without committing either Hildegard or himself. The temptation was strong to make the experiment; and he again repeated, very thoughtfully, the word "Jealous!"

"Yes, jealous; jealous of your allegiance. She will at first think I am to blame, but you must show her the contrary. You——"

"Stay," cried Hamilton, "what will Madame Rosenberg say?"

"No matter what, I shall give her no opportunity of lecturing me. She is too good-natured to tell the Doctor, and Biedermann will never hear anything about the matter."

"Biedermann?"

"Yes, Theodore, he would be much more angry than the Doctor, I suspect."

"But what right has he——?"

"Oh, none in the world; but, you see, I have got accustomed to his attentions, and cannot do without them—he is enormously prosy sometimes—but then he loves me—even when he is scolding I can observe it, and attribute half his lectures to jealousy. One likes a little *sentiment* sometimes, you know, and once accustomed to these sort of *petits soins*, it is impossible to resign them without an effort, of which I confess I am incapable; I should die of *ennui*."

“ But,” said Hamilton, “ do you not think there is danger in a—a connexion of the kind ?”

“ Danger ! not the least. He knows that I loved him formerly in a foolish, girlish sort of way, and had we been in England, I have no doubt we should have gone off together, and been miserable for life. The Doctor is a very kind, indulgent husband, but he has not time to be attentive, and as I have no family to occupy my time, I require some one to talk to, and amuse me. Theodore is well educated, clever, honourable, and all the sermons of all my relations and friends together, will not make me give him up. The world may talk, and, perhaps, condemn me—I care not, for I know that I never have done, and never mean to do, anything wrong.”

“ And,” said Hamilton, “ if Biedermann were to marry ?”

“ Not very probable for many years ; but if he were, I should find some one else. You, for instance, would suit me very well, if you were likely to remain here ; though I am afraid I should find you troublesome.”

“ I am afraid you would,” said Hamilton, as he drew up his horses before the Iron Works.

Hildegarde ran out, expecting to see her sister ; her disappointment changed into surprise when she heard what had occurred, and she said at once

that she would go to meet her. Perhaps she expected Hamilton to accompany her, but he either was, or pretended to be, too much occupied with Madame Berger to hear what she said, and she set out alone.

More than an hour elapsed before Crescenz, Major Stultz, and Hildegard appeared, all a good deal overheated, for the day had already become warm. They joined the others in the garden, and began to saunter up and down the narrow gravel walks, or to seek the shade under the apple trees in the orchard. Mr. Eisenmann immediately gathered a bunch of fresh roses for Crescenz, and Madame Berger, turning to Hamilton, desired him to bring her some also.

"I don't know whether or not I can obey you," he answered, laughing; "I have been forbidden to pull flowers without leave, ever since the day I beheaded some scores of roses with my riding whip."

"Your punishment is at an end," said Hildegard, smiling: "I am glad to perceive you have not forgotten it;" and, as she spoke, she pulled a half-blown rose and gave it to him.

"Ah! that is just the one I was wishing to have," cried Madame Berger, holding out her hand.

"You shall have another, but not this one," said Hamilton.

"*That*, and no other," cried Madame Berger ; and after some laughing and whispering, he gave her the flower.

Hildegarde was surprised, although, by a sort of tacit agreement, she and Hamilton usually avoided any exhibition of their intimacy or friendship when Madame Berger was present ; the latter continued, " I have an odd taste, perhaps, but my favourite flower is the common scarlet geranium. I do not see one here."

" The only plant I had," said Mr. Eisenmann, " I gave to Hildegarde, and she gave it to Mr. Hamilton to put on his flower-stand."

" Oh, if it belongs to you," said Madame Berger, with a light laugh, " I must have a branch of it directly," and she bounded into the house as she spoke.

" This is too much," cried Hamilton, running after her. A minute or two afterwards a violent scream was heard from his room, of which both windows were open.

" Shall we go and see what has happened?" whispered Crescenz to her sister.

" No, it is better to leave them alone."

" Lina is growing worse and worse every day," said Crescenz. " Blasius does not at all like my being with her, since people have begun to talk so much about her."

“What do people talk about?”

“They say that Mr. Biedermann is now constantly with her; never out of the house. In fact——”

At this moment Hans ran past them towards a shed, at the end of the orchard, where garden utensils and flower pots were kept, and having taken one of the latter, was returning to the house, when Crescenz asked what had happened.

“I don’t exactly know, ma’am; I believe Mr. Hamilton put a geranium on the top of the wardrobe, and Madame Berger, in trying to take it down, let it fall, and it is broken to pieces.”

“The pot or the plant?” asked Hildegarde.

“Both, I believe, mademoiselle,” answered Hans, hurrying into the house.

“How long is she likely to remain with him up stairs?” asked Crescenz.

“Until dinner-time, perhaps,” answered Hildegarde, carelessly; “he has got a number of paintings on china and new books to amuse her. But now you must come and see what a quantity of work I have done lately; you have no idea how useful I can be; even mamma praises me sometimes!”

The afternoon amusement was as usual, a walk in the oak wood. Hamilton and Madame Berger soon wandered away from the sisters, and after

waiting for their return more than an hour near the little chapel, Hildegarde and Crescenz began to walk home. "Well, Hildegarde, what do you think of this?" asked the latter, looking inquiringly at her sister's grave countenance.

"Nothing," she replied, quietly.

"So Blasius was quite mistaken, it seems; he said that Mr. Hamilton has long liked you, and that you were beginning to like him."

"He was quite right," said Hildegarde, "we do like each other very much, especially since my father's death; he was so very kind at that time."

"Blasius said it was more than mere liking. Now if you cared for him as Blasius supposed, his conduct to-day must vex you; you could not help feeling jealous."

"I have no right."

"Oh, one never thinks of right on such occasions," said Crescenz, smiling; "I remember the time I used to suffer tortures whenever he whispered and laughed with Lina. There was a time, too, when I could not have endured his preferring you to me, but now——"

"Now?" repeated Hildegarde, enquiringly.

"Now I don't think about him, and I like Blasius so much that I never think of comparing them. Mr. Hamilton is certainly very handsome, but, as Blasius says, one gets so accustomed to

good looks, that at last it makes no impression at all. By the bye, how improved Peppy is since he has been in the country," she added, as the child ran to meet her; "I declare he will be quite as handsome as Fritz—it is impossible not to like such noble looking creatures. I must say they are both a thousand times more loveable than Gustle, who promises to be extremely plain, and not in the least like either of us."

Hildegarde smiled at the discrepancy between the commencement and end of her sister's speech, but took no notice of it, and they spent the rest of the day in the arbour, talking over their school adventures, Crescenz' house affairs, and Hildegarde's plans for the future.

Hamilton and Madame Berger did not return until just before supper time; they entered into no explanation, and made no excuses: the latter merely observed, when arranging her hair in Hildegarde's room, "I really never spent a pleasanter day; Mr. Hamilton is positively charming—quite a love. I must not forget to wear the wreath of ivy he took such trouble to choose for me," and, while speaking, she twisted a long light branch with its deep green leaves among the tresses of her fair hair, and pushing back with both hands the mass of ringlets which covered her face, bestowed a glance of satisfied vanity on the looking

glass, and flourishing her pocket handkerchief left the room.

"I never saw Lina look so pretty as she does to-day," observed Hildegard.

"And do you really not feel angry with her?" asked Crescenz, as she put her arm round her sister's waist, and they began to descend the stairs together.

"Angry with her for having taken a long walk with Mr. Hamilton?"

"Ah, bah! you know very well what I mean."

"No, dear Crescenz, I am not in the least angry, whispered Hildegard, with a gay laugh, as she entered the room where the others were just placing themselves at table. Hamilton looked up, and beheld her clear brow and cheerful smile with painful uncertainty; Madame Berger bent towards him, and whispered, "You were right."

"How? when?"

"She does not care a straw for you. I never believed it until to-day."

Hamilton bit his lip, and slightly frowned.

"Oh, don't be annoyed about it; you cannot expect to succeed with all the world, you know. I suppose, having nothing else to do here, you have given yourself some trouble to please her, and it is disagreeable to find oneself mistaken, but you may remember I told you long ago that she

would exact a kind of love which few men are capable of feeling ; a sort of immaculate devotion, not to be expected from your sex, now that the times of knighthood are passed. She will never, in these degenerate days, find any one to love her as she imagines she deserves."

"And yet," said Hamilton, "she has so little personal vanity."

"That I consider one of her greatest defects. What is a woman without personal vanity? Avoid during the rest of your life all who have not, at least, a moderate quantity of it ; without it we are abnormous, unnatural, and it is impossible to know how to manage us."

"You have really given me a great deal of information to-day," said Hamilton, laughing ; "a few walks with you, and I should become a perfect tactician."

"If you choose, however, to try Hildegarde, further," said Madame Berger, "you must manage it yourself. She may think you now, for all I know, a victim to my arts and wiles, and more worthy of pity than anger."

Partly from pique, partly because he was amused, Hamilton devoted himself altogether to Madame Berger for the rest of the evening. He drew his chair behind her's after supper, and they continued together in the little dark parlour, even

after all the family had withdrawn to enjoy the long warm July evening in the garden.

It was almost night when Crescenz came timidly into the room, and in an embarrassed manner said, that she was too much afraid of Mr. Hamilton's horses to drive home with him, and that Mr. Eisenmann had offered his carriage——

"His cart, my dear, you mean," said Madame Berger, interrupting her, without moving a feature of her face. "I recommend you to have a few bars of iron laid at the back, the horses will be all the quieter; they are accustomed to the sound, you know."

"I—I thought," said Crescenz, "that you would, perhaps, prefer going home with me, instead——"

"Oh, not at all, my dear, I would not separate you and Major Stultz for the world; besides, I am not in the least afraid of either Mr. Hamilton or his horses. You see," she added, turning to Hamilton, "I take it for granted that you will leave me at home."

"Of course. I am only sorry," said Hamilton to Crescenz, "that you will not go with us; I can almost promise that the horses will be quieter than in the morning."

"Thank you," said Crescenz, rather stiffly, but even if they were I should now decline your

offer, as Lina has shewn so plainly that she does not wish for my company, or, indeed, for any one's excepting yours."

"I am overpowered at the severity of your remarks," cried Madame Berger, catching her arm, with a light laugh; "how fortunate that the darkness hides my blushes. I say, Cressy," she added, in a lower voice, "is it for yourself or for Hildegarde, that you have entered the lists?"

"I—I—don't understand you," said Crescenz, releasing her arm, and hurrying out of the room.

"Order your carriage," said Madame Berger, turning back for a moment to Hamilton; "order your carriage as soon as possible, or I shall get a lecture from Madame Rosenberg, and I am not in a humour for anything of the kind, just now."

The carriages were at the door together. "Hans may drive," cried Hamilton, springing into the phaeton after Madame Berger; and as long as they were in sight he seemed to be wholly occupied with the arrangement of her shawl.

"Hildegarde! Hildegarde! where have you hidden yourself?" cried Madame Rosenberg, about an hour afterwards, and a voice from the very end of the orchard answered, "Here, mamma, I am coming directly;" but even while speaking, Hildegarde turned again, and with folded arms and lingering steps continued her sentinel-like walk.

The next day Hamilton felt very uncertain whether or not he had acted wisely. Hildegarde was so upright and free from coquetry herself, that he feared she would not easily understand his motives, were he, in exculpation, to explain them; and even if he made them evident, she would condemn them. He met Madame Rosenberg on his way to breakfast; heard the half-joking, half-serious expostulations he had expected, and replied to them, as usual, with a mixture of petulance and impertinence.

He approached Hildegarde, hoping sincerely that he should find her angry, or at least offended, but all his efforts to discover anything of the kind failed; she was, perhaps, a little less cheerful than usual, but not enough to admit of his questioning her. Before dinner she received a letter, the handwriting was unknown to him, but though burning with curiosity to know from whom it came, when he saw her unusual trepidation on receiving it, he dared not ask her, though he would not have hesitated to have done so the day before. In the afternoon, when he expected her to walk, she sent Gustle to tell him, that she had a long letter to write and could not go out. The next few days she chose to assist her mother in preserving fruit, and then appeared an interminable quantity of needlework to be done. Hamilton

felt the change which had taken place in their intercourse without being able to cavil at it. He felt that he was to blame, but he nevertheless got out of patience, and began to drive into Munich every day. No one seemed to think he could be better employed, and many and various were the commissions given him by the different members of the family.

One day, just as he was telling Hildegarde that he should not return until late at night, as he intended to go to the opera, Madame Rosenberg entered the room; she held in her hand a silver hair pin of curious filagree work, and exclaimed, rather triumphantly, "Well, here is Lina Berger's silver pin, after all; not found in the garden where she said she lost it, but in your room, under the wardrobe. Monica saw it when she was scouring the floor."

"Very likely," said Hamilton; "Madame Berger mounted a chair to get at my scarlet geranium, which I hoped to have placed out of her reach on the top of the wardrobe; by making a spring she caught the flower pot, but descended on the edge of the chair, which fell with her to the ground. I was greatly alarmed, as after the first scream of fright she became unusually quiet, and although she said she was not hurt, she lay on the sofa without moving or opening her eyes long

after I had transplanted my poor geranium—and mourned over it,” he added, looking towards Hildegarde.

Madame Rosenberg laughed. “That was a trick to prevent you from scolding her about the plant which she saw you rather valued.”

“Perhaps it was,” said Hamilton, colouring, “and I never suspected it.”

“Well, you can tell her your present suspicions to-day, when you give her the hair pin, you know;” and she held it towards him as she spoke.

“I never go to Madame Berger’s,” said Hamilton, and he was glad to be able to say so, “but if you choose to give it to Hans, he can leave it at her house when I go to the theatre.”

“Hildegarde, make a little parcel of it and write her a line,” said Madame Rosenberg.

Hildegarde took her brother Gustle’s pen, and on a leaf of his copy book wrote a few severe words, which not even the usual “dear Lina,” or the schoolfellow *tutoiment* could soften.

Hamilton smiled, and unconsciously pulled his glove towards his wrist until he tore it. “These are the worst gloves I have ever had,” he cried, impatiently throwing them on the table, “that is the second pair I have spoiled to-day.”

“The gloves seem to be very good,” observed

Madame Rosenberg, taking them up, "and as they are a very pretty colour Hildegarde may as well mend them for you, but while she is doing so you must seal and direct this parcel to Lina," and leaving them thus employed, she walked out of the room.

"Permit me," said Hamilton, half jestingly, a few minutes afterwards, as Hildegarde returned him the gloves, "permit me to kiss your hand;" and then he added, "this seals our reconciliation, I hope?"

"We have had no quarrel, and require none," answered Hildegarde.

"Yet you have been displeased—angry with me—have you not?" asked Hamilton.

"I have had no cause—I have no right——"

"But you know what I mean?"

"I think I do," replied Hildegarde, half smiling, and quite blushing.

"And what did you suppose were my motives? What did you think of me?"

"I thought, after all your professions of regard for me, you might have waited until you reached England before you began a new—flirtation."

"Then you were a little—a very little jealous, perhaps?"

"I think not—I hope not," said Hildegarde, quickly, "for it would be very absurd, most ridi-

culous. In fact," she added frankly, "I did not care how much you devoted yourself to Lina, until I perceived that you wished me to observe it."

"I did wish you to observe it. I hoped to have elicited some spark of feeling from you in that way, after having failed in all others."

"And Lina Berger was the person chosen as assistant—as confidant, perhaps?"

"I had nothing to confide. I have never made any secret of my feelings towards you."

"So you wished to shew Lina Berger and every one else what you supposed were my feelings towards you? It was an ungenerous intention, Mr. Hamilton, all things considered, as any weakness on my part would have merely served to give you a useless triumph; but," she added, with heightened colour, "I am not offended, not in the least angry with you—or jealous, and for the short time we are likely to be now together, I hope we may be as good friends as we have been for the last few months. The whole affair is really not worth talking about."

"I hope, however, you do me the justice to believe me perfectly indifferent to Madame Berger?"

"About as indifferent as she is towards you. You flatter each other, and vanity draws you together."

"And you do not mind our being drawn together?"

"Not in the least," said Hildegarde, composedly.

"I believe you, I believe you. I am thoroughly convinced of your indifference, and require no other proof. I am sorry for it, but—perhaps, it is all for the best." At the door he turned back, and added, "We have not quarrelled, Hildegarde? we are friends, at least?"

"Friends! oh, certainly, though ever so far apart," answered Hildegarde, with a forced smile, "One so poor in friends as I am, grasps even at the name."

Hamilton noiselessly closed the door, and she bent over her work until some large tear began to drop on it, and a choking feeling in her throat induced her to go to the open window, where she leaned out as far as the numerous plants would permit, and gazed long into the orchard without distinguishing a single object that lay before her.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RECALL.

ABOUT a fortnight after the foregoing events, as Hamilton was one morning sitting listlessly in the arbour at the end of the garden, Hildegarde came towards him carrying a large packet of letters, which Hans had just brought from Munich. As she placed herself beside him he looked at the different handwritings, and murmured, " My sister Helen—my father—John, and—from uncle Jack, too! With what different feelings should I have received these letters a short time ago! Don't go away, Hildegarde, I have no intention of making you any reproaches or speeches, and I may, perhaps, want your advice about fixing the day of my departure."

She sat down on the steps leading into the

arbour, leaned her elbow on her knee and her head in her hands, and remained perfectly immovable for more than half an hour. She was not musing on the past, or thinking of the future ; she heard her heart beat distinctly, and would, perhaps, have endeavoured to count its throbs, had she not felt irresistibly compelled to listen to a most inharmonious and lamentable ditty sung by the cook, as she scoured her kitchen furniture near an open window. Some vague ideas of the happiness of those whose thoughts never soared beyond the polishing of pots and pans, or the concocting of meats within them, floated through her mind ; and then appeared a vision of a nursery garden, with very green grass and long gravel walks ; and then Hamilton rustled the paper of his letters, and she expected him to speak, and when he did not she again listened to the monotonous song, and wondered if it had no end.

The song continued but she ceased to hear it, for Hamilton spoke at length, and she turned round to answer him.

“ These letters contain the recall I have been expecting,” he said, folding them up, “ and also a large sum of money for my journey, more, much more than I shall require ; my uncle measures my expenses by my brother’s. In short, neither he nor any of my family have in the least degree compre-

hended my position here—their ignorance would shock you——” He stopped, evidently embarrassed. His uncle’s letter would, indeed, have shocked her; he had offered to send Hamilton any sum of money necessary to buy off the claims which Hildegard or her family might have upon him.

“ I suppose,” said Hildegard, “ they expect you home directly.”

“ They rather wish me to visit the Z.’s, as they have become acquainted lately with some of their connexions.”

“ And you intend to do so ?”

“ Yes, I have no particular wish to return home directly, though I see they expect me in about a fortnight or three weeks.”

“ In that case you will have to leave us soon—very soon.”

“ How soon ?” asked Hamilton, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of her face, which was, perhaps purposely, averted.

“ You are the best judge of that,” she answered, rising from her lowly seat; “ if leaving us be disagreeable to you, the sooner you get over it the better.”

“ It is more than disagreeable—it is painful to me.” He paused, and then added hastily, “ I shall take your advice and leave to-morrow.”

More than a minute he waited for her to speak again ; one word or one look might at that moment have changed all his plans, but finding that she remained silent, he slowly gathered up his letters, and walked thoughtfully into the house.

Madame Rosenberg talked more than enough ; she thought it necessary to put the whole house in commotion, and was so anxious to prove to him that all his clothes were in order, that she followed him to his room, and actually herself packed all his portmanteaux and cases ; she then seated herself on one of the former, and began to question him about what he intended to do with Hans, the horses, and phaeton.

“ I shall take Hans to England with me, and leave the horses at Munich to be sold. I dare say Stultz will take the trouble of looking after them for me.”

“ Dear me, how surprised he will be—and Crescenz—and Lina Berger. Really, the whole thing is so unexpected, that one has not time to think, or feel, or understand——”

“ That is just what I wished,” said Hamilton ; “ I hope not to have time to think or feel, for I leave your house most unwillingly, but leave it I must, as my father and uncle expect me home in a week or two, and I am going first to the Z.’s.”

“ Pray give the Baroness my compliments,”

said Madame Rosenberg ; “ it was very civil of her taking the children home—that evening, you know.”

Hamilton remembered the evening, but he thought it was very probable he should forget the compliments.

“ Sorry as I am to lose you,” continued Madame Rosenberg, “ I must say I think your relations are right to insist on your return ; as my father said yesterday, a young man with your capabilities being allowed to waste your time as you have been doing, is perfectly incomprehensible.”

“ My object was to learn German, and I have learned it,” said Hamilton.

“ It would have been better for you if Hildegard and Crescenz had not spoken French so well. My father says, too, you speak English now with Hildegard ; I’m sure I don’t know how she learned it. *I* never could learn French, though I have often tried, and I am not a stupid person in other things. I’m very glad, however, that she has learned English, though I formerly thought it unnecessary. Four languages for a girl not yet eighteen is pretty well, as poor dear Franz used to say, and——”

“ Four languages,” repeated Hamilton ; “ what is the fourth ?”

"Why, do you not know that she speaks and writes Italian quite as well as French? Mademoiselle Hortense is a half Italian, and she spared no pains in teaching her, most fortunately as it has turned out, for the lady with whom she is likely to be placed particularly requires Italian, as she is going to Italy next year."

"So Hildegard is to leave you also?"

"Yes, I was at first very unwilling, and, indeed, should not have consented were I still in Munich, but, you see, here she is never likely to marry, and after her sister has made such an excellent match, she would not be satisfied with our *fürster*, Mr. Weidmann, I am afraid."

"I should think not," said Hamilton.

"Now as she is certainly remarkably handsome," continued Madame Rosenberg, "and within the last year greatly improved, too; I should not at all wonder if at Frankfort or Florence she were to pick up some one——"

"Not at all unlikely," observed Hamilton.

"Or if old Count Zedwitz were to die, perhaps his son might again——"

Hamilton began to stride up and down the room with unequivocal signs of irritation.

"I see all this is uninteresting to you," said Madame Rosenberg, placing her hands on her knees to assist her in rising from her low, unsteady seat. "How can I expect you to care who

she marries or where she goes, or, indeed, what becomes of any of us now? In a few weeks you will have forgotten us altogether!"

"How little you know me," cried Hamilton, taking her hand as she was passing him; "I shall never forget you, or the happy days passed in your house, and am so sincerely attached to you and all your family, that nothing will give me greater pleasure than hearing of or from you. I shall leave you my address in London, and hope that you, and your father, and the children will often write to me. When Fritz comes home for the holidays I shall expect a long letter, not written from a copy, and in his best handwriting, but unrestrained, and telling me everything about you all."

"Well, I really believe you do like us," cried Madame Rosenberg, the tears starting to her eyes, "but after all, not as well as we like you; and now, I think, I had better leave you, or else I shall make an old fool of myself."

Hamilton's hours that day were winged; they flew past uneasily, like birds before an approaching storm. The afternoon, evening, and night came; Mr. Eisenmann dozed, Madame Rosenberg inspected her sleeping children, and Hildegarde and Hamilton for the first time sat gravely and silently beside each other; neither of them

had courage to attempt the mockery of unconcerned conversation ; each equally feared a betrayal of weakness, and it was a relief to both when the time for moving arrived. Mr. Eisenmann retired quietly to his room on the ground floor ; Madame Rosenberg, after wishing Hamilton good night, took the house keys out of the cupboard and commenced her usual nightly examination of all the windows and doors. Hamilton sprang up the stairs, and watched at the door of his chamber until he heard Hildegarde separate from her mother and begin to ascend ; he waited until she had deposited her candle and work-basket on the table in her room, and as she afterwards advanced to close the door he called her out on the lobby, and said, hurriedly, “ Hildegarde, I shall have no opportunity of speaking to you alone to-morrow, and must take advantage of this to ask you to forgive and forget all my faults and failings.”

“ I cannot remember any,” said Hildegarde.

“ You say so, but I know you think that I endeavoured to gain your affections without any fixed purpose. That is true—I mean, this *was* true until lately—but that is of no importance now. Then I must confess I—I was not sorry for the unpleasant termination of the affair with Zedwitz. I now, too, see that I ought not to have come here with you, still less should I have endeavoured to make you jealous, or——”

"Oh, I give you absolution for all," cried Hildegarde, interrupting him, "and hope you will endeavour to forget how often you have seen me impatient or in a passion."

"I have already forgotten it, and wish I could forget everything else besides that has occurred during the last eleven months. We have been eleven months together, have we not?"

"I believe so, answered Hildegarde, thoughtfully. "It appears to me much longer; my life has been so different from what it was before that time, I feel almost as if I had known you eleven years."

The sound of closing doors no longer distant made Hamilton whisper anxiously, "I shall not find it easy to part from you with becoming firmness before so many witnesses to-morrow, Hildegarde, still less should I have courage to entreat you once more to accept the little watch which you so unkindly returned to me last Christmas. Will you again refuse it?"

"No," she replied, "although I should have greatly preferred something of less value, I only wish I had anything to bestow in return; but I have nothing, absolutely nothing."

"Stay," said Hamilton, with some hesitation, "you have something which you value highly, though I do not know why; a little mysterious bauble, which I should like to possess."

"Name it, and it is yours," said Hildegarde, eagerly.

He placed his finger on the hair bracelet which she constantly wore.

"Ah, my bracelet," cried Hildegarde, with a look of surprise, "if you wish for it, certainly; in fact it is better." She held her arm towards the door of her room, that the light from the candle might fall on it, and Hamilton thought he saw tears in her eyes as she endeavoured to unclasp it.

"I only value it because you appear so attached to it," he said, half apologetically. "Before it comes into my possession, however, you must tell me whose hair I am about to guard so carefully for the rest of my life; not Mademoiselle Hortense's, I hope."

"No," said Hildegarde, holding it towards him.

"Tell me whose hair it is?" he cried eagerly, for Madame Rosenberg's heavy step, and the jingling of her large keys became every moment more audible, and as she approached the staircase, he again repeated, "whose hair?" but Hildegarde, instead of answering, sprang into her room just as a long ray of light from her mother's candle reached the spot where they stood. Madame Rosenberg found Hamilton's door shut, and Hildegarde on her knees beside her bed, with her head buried in her hands.

And Hamilton never suspected that the bracelet

he examined so long and earnestly that night was made of his own hair, obtained at the time he had been wounded in the head, by the fall from, or rather with, his horse.

The whole family were assembled at an early hour the next morning to witness his departure. Madame Rosenberg unreservedly applied her handkerchief to her eyes ; her father looked grave ; the two little boys, half frightened at the unusual solemnity of the breakfast table, whispered and nudged each other, while Hildegarde, pale as the wife of Seneca, was apparently the only unmoved person present.

Hamilton took leave of all the workmen and servants, shook hands with Mr. Eisenmann, was kissed in the most maternal manner on both cheeks by Madame Rosenberg, embraced the little boys, and held Hildegarde's hand in his just long enough to cause a transient blush to pass over her features and make her look like herself.

After he had driven off, he turned round in the carriage to take a last look, and it seemed to him as if her beautiful features had turned to marble, so cold and statue-like were they. Madame Rosenberg was returning into the house, talking to her cook ; the old man was gaily playing with the children ; Hildegarde stood alone, motionless on the spot where he had left her.

“ Is that indifference ? ” thought Hamilton.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOHENFELS.

It was late on the evening of the ensuing day when Hamilton reached Hohenfels, a moderate sized, high-roofed dwelling house, having two dark coloured massive square towers as wings. It was beautifully situated on the side of a rocky mountain, from which circumstance it probably derived its name. Avenue there was none; the narrow private road which conducted to it (though passing through woods with opening glades, which even without their splendid mountain back ground, would have successfully rivalled any avenue Hamilton had ever seen in England), was evidently intended to serve equally as an approach to several comfortable peasants' houses, which, apparently, more than the genius of an engineer had originally directed its course.

The buildings, at a little distance from Hohenfels, Hamilton now instinctively knew to be a brewery and its appendages, and he examined them with less curiosity but infinitely more interest than on a former occasion. If he did not quite consider beer (as some one has not inaptly pronounced it) a fifth element in Bavaria, he had at least so frequently heard its merits, demerits, and price canvassed, that he began to attach considerable importance to the subject, and rather prided himself on being able to talk about it.

On driving into the court, he looked up along the range of windows, and discovered with great pleasure A. Z. standing at one of them. He had not had time to write, or in any way to announce his visit, therefore her first look of surprise rather amused him when they met, and she regretted that her husband was on a hunting expedition, and would not be at home until the next day; he was glad that no letter from him had interfered with the arrangement. They supped together under a large chestnut tree, commanding an extensive view of woods, mountains, and a part of the Chiem Lake, now glittering in all the radiance of a magnificent sunset.

"I had no idea," said Hamilton, "that you were so near home when I met you at Seon last summer. I understand now why you were always

on the move, and we saw so little of you. By the bye, I should like to hear something of the Zedwitz'; they are relations or intimate friends of yours, I believe?"

"Distant relations, but very near and dear friends," answered A. Z. "I am sorry I have nothing satisfactory to tell you; the old Count is killing himself as fast as he can with perspiration and cold water; his wife had a fit of apoplexy this summer, from which she is, however, nearly recovered; and Maximilian has, you know, been constantly from home since that unpleasant business with the Rosenberg family. He was with us for a few weeks, and I never in my life saw a man in such a state of desperation; his only consolation was talking to me about this "cunningest pattern of excelling nature," this Hildegarde, and as I had a great deal to do in my house, and could not always find time to listen to him, he used to wander about, writing sonnets I should imagine, from the poetical expression of his dear ugly face."

"So he told you all about it?" said Hamilton.

"Yes, and all about you too; that is, all he knew about you. He seemed to have dreaded you excessively as a rival; indeed he does so still, for were his father to die I have not the smallest doubt

he would renew his proposal, and, perhaps, be accepted."

"I admire his patience and perseverance," said Hamilton, ironically; "one downright refusal such as he received would have satisfied me."

"Circumstances might materially alter the state of the case," said A. Z. "Suppose this flirtation with you quite over—you have left, most probably, without any sort of serious explanation; now I have no doubt you are very charming, but, you know, people do get over hopeless affairs of this kind in the course of time, and in the course of time, too, Maximilian will be at liberty to marry whoever he pleases. I cannot imagine his being refused again, he is so exactly the sort of man most women like."

"He does not think so himself," observed Hamilton.

"That is his great charm," said A. Z. "Diffident enthusiastic men are almost always popular. I have a decided predilection for them."

"I think, however, you are singular in your taste," said Hamilton.

"Not at all," rejoined A. Z.; "the secret may be, that such men think less of themselves and more of the person they wish to please, but in nine cases out of ten, you will find that it is an ugly man who inspires real affection. It is very

creditable to our sex, you must allow ; one so very seldom hears of a man who loves a really ugly woman."

"Perhaps you are right," said Hamilton, "my experience has not been great. I only know that I am now very seriously and, I fear, hopelessly in love with a very young and very beautiful woman."

"You will get over it," observed A. Z., laughing. "A few months in London, if it were not so late in the year——"

"You are mistaken," said Hamilton, gravely ; "neither a few months nor a few years either are likely to change my feelings."

"I am sorry to hear it," said A. Z., thoughtfully ; "never will I sign a letter with my initials again."

"I had quite forgotten that your note was the cause of all this evil," said Hamilton, smiling, "but there would be no evil at all if Hildegarde liked me."

"So it is all on your side," observed A. Z., with some surprise.

"I don't know, but I am afraid so. If it will not bore you I should like to explain, and ask your advice——"

"Stay," cried A. Z., "I don't at all know this Hildegarde, and I now do know something of you and your family, and shall therefore certainly re-

commend you to break off the affair, if you can do so with honour; and that you can do so is scarcely to be doubted, if you imagine her indifferent to you."

"But suppose she had been indifferent only because I said I could not marry?"

"It would prove that she is as prudent as she is pretty, and that is saying a great deal," answered A. Z., gaily, "and as you can *not* marry, the least said about the matter the better."

"You do not quite understand the state of the case," began Hamilton. "You see I have a granduncle——"

"Called Jack," observed A. Z.

"Exactly," said Hamilton; "and this uncle Jack made a fortune in India, in those times when fortunes were to be made there, and added to this fortune by speculations in the funds at the end of the last war; we have consequently a great respect for him."

"Of course," said A. Z.; "people always have a respect for rich uncles, both in books and real life. I never had one, but I can imagine the thing."

"As he had no children," continued Hamilton, "my father prudently chose him as godfather to his eldest son, who was accordingly afflicted with the name of John, but even in his earliest youth

it was found that the name would not cover the multitude of his sins, poor fellow, and while I was still a mere child my uncle declared that John would inherit from his father more than he would ever deserve, and that I, and I alone, should be his heir. He defrayed all the expenses of my education, gave me ponies and pocket money, and would have paid my debts, I do believe, without hesitation, if I had had any at Cambridge. Since I have been here, too, he has sent me large remittances through my father, and latterly, I suspect, forbidden the words of wisdom which usually accompanied them. The first letter I ever received from him was the day before yesterday; he had heard—more than was necessary, more than was true—of Hildegarde, and can you imagine his proposing to send me money to buy off—to pay—to satisfy—pshaw! where is the letter? You must read it or you will never understand——”

“*He* does not understand, that is very evident,” observed A. Z.; “you need not show me the letter, but go on.”

“When I told Hildegarde that I must return home she recommended my leaving directly; she had, indeed, advised me to do so before the letter arrived.”

“And did she give you this advice without any apparent effort?”

“ Without apparent effort, yes ; but she is not to be judged from appearances. She has been educated by a Mademoiselle Hortense, who has given her the idea, that besides controlling her temper, which is naturally hasty, she should endeavour to conceal all her feelings, and, if possible, stifle them altogether. If Hildegarde had not been naturally warm hearted, hot-tempered, and intellectual, such an education would have completely spoiled her.”

“ But,” said A. Z., “ after having lived nearly a year in the same house, if you can have any doubts about her caring for you——”

“ Stay,” cried Hamilton, interrupting her, “ you are not, perhaps, aware that I proclaimed myself a younger son, and said I could not marry, even before I entered the Rosenbergs’ house, and as, until very lately, I never *seriously* thought of sacrificing my really brilliant prospects, Hildegarde is still unconscious that even, with the best intentions, I could have acted otherwise than as I have done. I have been more calculating and worldly-minded than befits such an attachment, but latterly, as the time drew near when I knew we must part, I was ready to brave all my family, and be disinherited by my uncle, if she had only said one word, given me one look, from which I could have felt certain that she loved me.”

"I suppose," said A. Z., rising, and walking towards the house, "I suppose, from what you have just said, that you have some fortune independent of your family—enough, at least, to buy bread and butter?"

"I have five thousand pounds. A legacy left me by a distant relation, but it is not at my disposal for two years. This would not be enough for England, but I think here, as you say, it would, perhaps, buy bread and butter——"

"Oh, yes!" said A. Z. laughing, "and roast veal and pudding into the bargain, but that is not all that is to be considered. You ought not to make so great a sacrifice without considering long and carefully, both sides of the question."

"Oh, I have considered only too long," answered Hamilton, "but I see you cannot understand me, or know Hildegard without reading my journal. I had some intention of leaving it under your care, at all events, and I shall only beg of you, never to refer to that part of it which relates to Count Oscar Raimund."

"I think, I already know," said A. Z., "His father shewed me the letter he had written the day he shot himself."

"Does Mademoiselle Rosenberg know that she was the cause?"

"But too well, as you will perceive from my

journal," answered Hamilton, "you really seem to know everybody and everything, which however, no longer surprises me, as I am myself willing on so short an acquaintance to confide in you. I suppose other people have done the same."

"Not exactly," answered A. Z., "but as I know the Zedwitz, the Raimunds, the Bergers, and even Mr. Biedermann, and as you, from the peculiarity of the commencement of our acquaintance, rather interested me, I have thought it worth while to listen, and remember all I have heard about you."

"How very kind," said Hamilton.

"You say that thoughtlessly," observed A. laughing, "but it really was kind of me, for I greatly prefer talking to listening, on most occasions."

"Will reading my journal bore you?"

"Not in the least. I shall be curious to know the impression made on you by all you must have seen of the domestic manners you were so anxious to become acquainted with last year. Have you given up all idea of writing a book on the subject?"

"I have been a much too greatly interested actor to have thought of anything of the kind, as you will see."

"Before I read your journal," said A. Z., "that

is, before I feel any interest in this Hildegarde, you must allow me to point out to you all the disadvantages of the step you propose taking, and remind you that the sacrifice of parents, relations, the friends of your youth, your country and your native language, ought not to be lightly made. I speak from experience."

"But you told me," said Hamilton, "that you felt quite naturalized—that you had become a very Bavarian! I know too, you are more than contented; you are happy. The Countess Zedwitz told me so."

"Very true," answered A. Z., "but I am a woman, and that alters the case materially: both our nature and education induce us to conform to the habits of those about us—we have no profession, no career in life to give up, we have only to learn to enlarge or contract our sphere of action, according to the circumstances in which we may be placed. For instance, Mademoiselle Rosenberg would most probably without hesitation, go with you to England, were your uncle to consent to your marriage."

"I cannot help thinking that—perhaps—she would," answered Hamilton.

"And if she did, she would never have any cause to regret having done so, for besides being united to the person she loved, she would only

have to learn to live luxuriously, and habits of that kind are easily acquired, but after having so lived, frugality is more difficult of acquirement—and that would be your task.”

“ But I have tried it,” cried Hamilton, eagerly, “ I have made the trial this last year. I see that riches are not necessary to my happiness—I am convinced, that with Hildegarde and a cottage —”

“ So you would live in the country ?”

“ Of course.”

“ And in the mountains ?”

“ Here, in your neighbourhood, if possible.”

“ You are bribing me,” cried A. Z., “ more than you know. I am in want of such neighbours, and although it is getting cool,” she added, drawing her shawl round her, “ still as it is not yet dark, we may as well return to the chesnut tree, and perhaps walk to the beech-wood, which you saw from it.”

On ascending a slight acclivity, a more extensive view of the Chiem lake became visible, and a peasant's house with its overhanging roof and long balcony, stood before them—it was built almost in the mountain, at least it appeared so at a little distance ; a noisy stream rushed out of the rocks beside it, and formed a series of cascades, while endeavouring to reach the green fields, and dark

wood beneath. Under the numerous fruit-trees which surrounded the house, with their overloaded branches bending to the ground, were several wooden benches; on one of these A. Z. seated herself, while Hamilton attracted by the light from some windows on the ground-floor, seemed disposed to inspect the premises more closely. A loud chorus of voices made him hesitate.

"They are at their evening prayers," observed A. Z. "it is better not to disturb them. Come here, and listen to me——You have not often seen a house more beautifully situated than this, most probably!"

"Never."

"The mountain peasants know how to choose a site! You have no idea how highly they value a view of this kind, or how they feel the beauty of their scenery; their eyes and minds are from infancy accustomed to grand and striking forms—the want of them causes the ennui and listlessness called *Maladie du pays*, *Nostalgie*, or *Heimweh*, from which all mountaineers suffer, more or less, when in a town or distant from their mountains. I can understand it, as I have actually felt this *maladie*, for which, by the bye, we have no English name, when I was obliged to remain in Munich for some time, about two years ago. The peasant to whom that house and all those fruitful

fields below us belong, is about deliberately to die of this most lingering and melancholy disease ; he intends to emigrate to America !”

“ Oh what a fool !” cried Hamilton.

“ I have said as much to him, but in rather more civil terms,” answered A. Z ; “ but all to no purpose : perhaps, when you know his motives, you may think differently, though I can not. The extreme cheapness of education in Bavaria is a great temptation to the peasants, when their sons distinguish themselves at the german schools, to let them continue their education, learn Latin, and afterwards study at the University. It is a common thing for them to rise to eminence in the learned professions, and the eldest son of my friend Felsenbauer here would most probably have done so, had it not chanced that when he had nearly completed his studies, that revolutionary attempt of the Students took place in the year 1830, of which you may, perhaps, have heard. Whether or not he were implicated, is unknown : but after having concealed himself for some time, and found that all his most intimate friends had been imprisoned, he wrote to his father for money, and went off to America. He has married an American, and is so advantageously placed at Cincinnati, that he is most desirous to have his family near him, and his letters are from year to year more pressing.

The old man is now only waiting to find a purchaser for his house and grounds——!”

“I understand,” said Hamilton, laughing, “You think that house, with a few alterations, might be made as comfortable as it is pretty. What price does he demand?”

“About twelve hundred pounds: but he will not get more than a thousand for it; and is therefore likely to have to wait for a year or two before he finds a purchaser; so you have plenty of time either to buy it, or change your mind, which I suspect you will do after your return home. At all events I recommend your inspecting it some day with Herrmann, who understands such things perfectly—it will not be uninteresting to you to know the financial position of a peasant of this kind, and if he have the smallest hopes of your ever being a purchaser, he will unreservedly show you all his accounts.”

While they were speaking, the peasant and his wife, followed by their second son and a daughter, came out of the house, and a long conversation ensued. It was so dark when A. Z. proposed leaving, that the old man insisted on accompanying her home with a lantern.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHEIBEN-SCHIESSEN (TARGET SHOOTING-MATCH):

BARON Z. returned the next day, was delighted to see Hamilton, and went about with him every where, showing and explaining whatever he thought likely to interest him. One of their excursions was to the marriage of a woodranger with the daughter of an innkeeper, who lived deep in the mountains. There was to be a dance and target shooting match as wedding festivities ; and it was with no small satisfaction that Hamilton, at an unmentionably early hour in the morning, followed Baron Z. to his room to choose one of his rifles for the latter. Hamilton did not, as on a former occasion, listen with indifference while he descanted on their merits, but examined them carefully, poised them on his hand, and pointed

them out of one of the windows at the little belfry of the house he had visited with A. Z., and which he now chose as a target.

"You really look as if you understood what you were about," observed A. Z., who was pouring out their coffee. "If you have gained nothing else by your residence in Bavaria, you have at least learned to get up in the morning, and to use a rifle!"

"Both decidedly German accomplishments," replied Hamilton, laughing, "and learned, in both cases, from ladies. Madame Rosenberg, and the Baroness Waldorf, have been my instructresses, as you will find when you look over my journal."

"Which I intend to do to-day, when I am alone and quiet," said A. Z., "and then we can talk about it whenever you are disposed."

"Time to be off!" cried Baron Z.; and Hamilton found himself soon after, driving through the wildest passes of the mountains at an hour which he formerly had considered ought to be devoted to sleep in a darkened chamber.

The road was still in shadow, though the sun shone brightly on the rocks above them, and it was only through an occasional cleft in them, or a widening of the pass through which the road lay, that the warm rays occasionally tempered the bracing morning air. For the first time since Ha-

milton had left the Rosenbergs, he felt exhilarated—disposed to enjoy life as he had formerly done. It must not be supposed that he was beginning to forget Hildegarde—quite the contrary—his mental struggles were over—absence, that surest test of affection, had proved to him, that without her the best years of his life would be clouded: so completely had the world, and all relating to it, been changed to him during the last year, so different were all his ideas from what they had been, that his recollections of home were becoming ruins, and it was with difficulty that his imagination supplied the broken walls and crumbling window sills of his former splendid visions of pomp and riches. His only fears now were of Hildegarde herself, he half dreaded a repulse: but he had resolved to brave even that; and since his resolutions had been formed, he had again begun to feel pleasure in every thing surrounding him. When Baron Z. stepped out of the little low carriage, which he called a “sausage,” to gather bunches of the beautiful wild rhododendron, commonly called *Alpen rosen*, Hamilton sprang joyously up the side of the mountain with him, and experienced a boyish satisfaction in scrambling higher and higher still, to obtain a branch with deeper coloured flowers, or a few sweetly scented cyclamens.

Their destination was a village, which as nearly resembled a nest as could well be imagined, so completely was it surrounded by mountains, all wooded nearly to the summit; there were about thirty houses and two large inns. Baron Z.'s brewery supplied the place with beer, and it was, as he informed Hamilton, in the characters of a brewer and his friend that they that day appeared. They were, however, persons of considerable importance, as Hamilton soon discovered, for the marriage had been delayed until their arrival, and the gay procession was then first formed, with which, preceded by loud music, in which a flageolet contended in vain with a couple of horns for predominance, they marched to the church. Hamilton, on perceiving that all the men had large bouquets of flowers, and streaming ribbons in their hats, immediately decorated his with *Alpen rosen*. As to Baron Z., neither he nor any of the other numerous gentlemen who came in the course of the day to shoot, could be distinguished at a little distance from the peasants. The strong shoes, worsted stockings, black breeches, leather belts with their curiously worked initials, loose grey shooting jackets, and slouched hats with black cock feathers, were common to all. A nice observer might, perhaps, have discovered a difference in the materials, but even that was generally

avoided. If ever a German nobleman feels that those who are not in his class are equal or superior to him, it is at a *Scheiben Schiessen*. There the best shot is the best man. The consciousness of strength and power, which the free use of arms, and the habit of seeking pleasure and fame in their dexterous use is not without its national importance; such men can scarcely fail to make good soldiers, or defend their mountain homes in time of war.

Excepting while they dined, Baron Z. never ceased shooting. Hamilton, contented with having acquitted himself creditably, began at the end of a couple of hours to wander about; he first looked into the room where the wedding banquet was being slowly served; it had already lasted more than three hours, which is scarcely to be wondered at, as between the courses, the more youthful part of the company made their way up the crowded staircase to a large room under the roof, where they danced; the measured sound of the waltz step forming a sort of metronome to the musicians, who, at times, seemed more attentive to the movements of those about them than their occupation, thereby occasionally producing such extraordinary and wild sounds that Hamilton allowed himself to be pushed up the stairs into their immediate vicinity. Finding a quiet corner, he tranquilly

smoked his cigar and looked on, an amused spectator of a scene which formed for him a picture of the most interesting description, from its novelty and thoroughly national character.

The room, spacious and well floored, was immediately under the roof, of which the rafters and, on close inspection, the tiles were visible. The musicians, placed in a corner and well supplied with beer, blew, whistled, and scraped with all their might, the violincello, with its eternal tonic, dominant, and subdominant, acting as whipper-in to the other instruments. The trumpet, occasionally raised to one of the windows in the roof, informed the absent of the opportunity they were losing, or served as an invitation to the lazy. Diminutive beer barrels connected with strong planks formed seats along the walls, and on them the half breathless dancers, in their picturesque costumes, occasionally sat and rested; a few elderly peasants were established round a table behind the door, and near them stood a fine specimen of a rustic exclusive, with his arms folded, and bright blue eyes audaciously following each dancing pair as they passed; he lounged against the wall, until seeing some known, or loved, or pretty girl, he was moved to touch her partner on the shoulder, and however unwilling the latter might be, he was obliged in courtesy to resign her until she had

taken some turns round the room with the interloper, who, on returning her to her partner, thanked *him*, and the flushed and panting girl invariably looked delighted at this most approved mode of publicly doing her homage. Hamilton observed about half a dozen beauties who never were allowed to rest for one moment.

Light and shade were disposed as the most fastidious painter could desire; the rays of the afternoon sun, as they entered by the open windows, rendered even the tremulous motion of the air and the usually imperceptible particles of dust apparent, while the gradually dispersing light made the silver laced boddices of the women glitter, and the beaming faces of the men to glow more deeply. Here for the first time Hamilton saw the real *Laendler* danced, the waltz in all its nationality—as unlike anything he had ever heard so denominated as could well be imagined. It was a German fandango with nailed shoes instead of castanets, but there was life, energy, and enjoyment in every movement. The origin of the name of waltz for this dance is from *walzen*, to turn round, and this the dancers did regularly, though not quickly when together, but they often separated, and then the movements were as uncertain as various, accompanied on the part of the man by the snapping of fingers, clapping their knees with

both hands, and springing in the air, while ever and anon they uttered a piercing peculiar cry, something between shouting and singing. During the time the men performed these wild gesticulations, their partners waltzed on demurely before them, and when they joined each other again it was usually with a few decided foot stampings that they recommenced their rotatory motions.

It was long before Hamilton felt disposed to leave this scene of rustic festivity, when he did so it was but to witness another of a different kind, for as the evening approached, and the noise of the rifles began by degrees to cease, all the singers and zither players in the neighbourhood assembled in the garden; it was in the midst of them that Hamilton was found by Baron Z., and though he soon after joined the latter and his friends at another table, he still turned round and endeavoured to hear the words or hum the chorus of their songs.

"Our national music seems to interest you," observed an elderly gentleman in a green shooting jacket, drawing his chair close to Hamilton's.

"Very much, but I find it rather difficult to understand the words, though I hear them very distinctly."

"Of course you do; a foreigner must always find it difficult to understand our different dialects, and we have many."

Baron Z. took a little book of songs out of his pocket and handed it to Hamilton, who, after a few unsuccessful attempts, at length was able to read and understand one of them. "Are these songs ancient or modern?" he asked, after a pause.

"These," answered Baron Z., "are of an uncertain age, and are common in the Bavarian highlands; but we have some national songs of the same description which are extremely ancient."

"We know," observed the elderly gentleman, "we know from the poems of Walter von der Vogelweide, that even at the end of the twelfth century the peasants had their own songs, which, to the great annoyance of the celebrated poet, were gladly heard and highly valued by the princes and knights of his time. The highest nobles then danced to their own songs, as you may sometimes see the Austrian peasant do to this day. The rhymes of the *Nibelungenliede** and other old German epic poems are precisely of the same description as these songs, which is also a proof of their antiquity."

"And is the music as old as the poetry?" asked Hamilton.

* The *Nibelungenliede* is a very ancient poem, greatly valued but little read—like the works of Chaucer and Spencer in England.

"I believe so," replied Baron Z.; "it was intended for dancing as well as singing, as the universal name of *Schnader-huepfel* denotes; the word *schnaden* means to talk or chat, and *huepfen* to jump or dance about."

"And is all your old national music of this gay *schnader-huepfel* description?" asked Hamilton.

"Oh no, we have melancholy and sentimental too, but our mountaineers are too gay and happy a people to allow the mournful to predominate, or even to have its due share in their music; the sorrowful thought of one verse is sure to find consolation in a jesting contradiction in the next. The Alpine songs are generally of this description, and the girls who have the charge of the cows on the Alps sing them together, and continue to do so after they have left the mountains, which has caused them to become familiar to the inhabitants of the vallies. Then there is the jodel, the song without words, which has so much resemblance to the *ranz des vaches* of the Swiss, and which requires both practice and compass of voice."

"Oh, I remember," said Hamilton, "what you and some of the others sung when we were on the chamois hunt last year; sometimes it sounded like water bubbling, and then came some queer high notes and a sort of shout—it was quite adapted to the mountains,—quite beautiful when

there was an echo. I should like to learn it."

"You will find it more difficult than you imagine," said Baron Z., "that is, if you have ever learned to sing; my wife has never been able to manage it, and she has often tried."

"I shall learn to jodel and play the zither, too," said Hamilton, "that is if I ever come to reside in Germany."

"If," said Baron Z., and then he joined in the chorus of the song, which was being sung at the table nearest them.

* * * * *

"How different the same scene looks in the gradually increasing light of early morning, and the deepening shades of approaching evening!" observed Baron Z., as he leaned back in the carriage on their way home, and looked along the valley through which the road lay: it had become so narrow that it seemed about to close altogether, while a towering mountain, facing them as they advanced, appeared to prevent all further progress; "and yet I scarcely know which is to be preferred in a country of this description."

"The evening, certainly, the evening;" said Hamilton, looking round; "but a little earlier; the sun should still be on those rocks above us, and make them successively yellow, red, copper-

coloured and violet, as I have seen them every evening from the garden at Hohenfels."

"I wish," said Baron Z., "I wish that we could see them from the top of our alp to-night; we cannot expect this unclouded weather to last much longer."

"Have you an alp of your own?" asked Hamilton.

"No; but I have rented one for the last two years, and find it answers very well, the greater part of my cattle are there now. It was not, however, of my cows and calves that I was thinking, but of the chamois on the mountain near the alp, of which the Förster from G. told me this morning. Now, as you acquitted yourself so well to-day at the *Scheiben Schiessen*, I do not see why you should not become a sportsman at once."

"Do you think I should have any chance?"

"Why not? You must make a beginning sometime or other."

"I suppose game is very plentiful here?" said Hamilton.

"Not what you would call plenty, at least we have not grouse or black cocks as my wife tells me you have in Scotland."

"But I have heard of splendid *battues* in the neighbourhood of Munich."

"I dare say, in the royal chase where eight or

nine hundred hares, and other game in proportion, have been shot in one afternoon,—but that is not my idea of sport. I prefer a chamois hunt to all others, next to that, black cock; and I am quite satisfied if I shoot three or four during the season.”

“Are the black cock so difficult to be got at?”

“More troublesome than difficult, though I have occasionally found them almost as high on the mountains as the chamois! It is the waiting and watching—the being up before sunrise, that gives me an interest, though it generally disgusts others whose actual profession it does not happen to be.”

“I suppose,” said Hamilton, “it is the actual profession of these Försters? There was one near the Iron Works, and he always supplied Madame Rosenberg with game;—she paid him for it, however.”

“Of course she did,” replied Baron Z., laughing; “and if you shoot a chamois, you must pay for it too, that is, if you wish to keep it. I have myself, no game whatever, but as the Förster rents the whole chase in my neighbourhood from government, I have as much sport as I please, and in fact as much game too: I pay for whatever I retain, and so do all the others to whom he has given the permission to shoot; but I suspect his

profits are not great, for we have a number of *Wildschützen*, wild hunters,—poachers you call them, I believe, in England.”

“Yes, one hears of them continually in the country; I begin to have a faint idea that they may be great nuisances.”

“I have no intention of exactly undertaking their defence,” said Baron Z., “but here in the mountains, where almost every man is a good shot, and the ideas of some are rather confused as to the better right which one man may have more than another, to shoot an animal roaming about among the rocks—the crime is, to say the least, venial. I, for my part, could never pursue a *wildschützen* with the wish to catch him; but between them and the *Försters* there is the most implacable hatred and deadly war.—When they meet without witnesses, it not unfrequently happens that they fire at each other! If the *Förster* fall, he is immediately missed—if the *Wildschütz*—it often remains long undiscovered. Last winter the body of a young man was found on one of the mountains here, several weeks after his friends had first privately, and then publicly, sought him. There is little doubt that he was shot by one of our woodrangers, and the man was immediately arrested, but no sort of proof could be obtained; the day of the young man’s death was unknown

the woodranger had been on that mountain, but also on others about the supposed time—shots had been heard by some wood-cutters, but not more than could be accounted for by the game brought home ; in short, he was set at liberty, but the fate of the wildschütz, who was a handsome, good-humoured fellow, created much interest and pity, so you see there is so much danger, and so little profit, so much romance, and so little vulgarity about them altogether, that they are not unfrequently the subject of a song or the hero of a legend. I am not even quite sure that the suspicion of a young man being at times a wild hunter, would injure him in the opinion of any girl born and bred among the mountains !”

“ I dare say not,” said Hamilton, “ women higher born, and better bred, have not unfrequently similar feelings, and the very word is in itself the essence of romance ! You must allow that it sounds a vast deal better than Förster, or Förstmeister, or Förstcommissioner, or Först inspector. Everybody seems to be Först something in this part of the world.

“ And are we not surrounded by forests ? Are not all our mountains covered with wood ?” asked Baron Z., laughing, “ can you wonder that in a country where wood is used as fuel, that the care and culture of it should be of the greatest importance ?”

"Then these Försters are not a—exactly game-keepers?"

"No; the preserving of the game is, however, always in connexion with the woods and forests. The Förstmeister, Förstactuar, Försters, and Förstpracticants are appointed by government, the under Förster, or wood-ranger, is the only thing at all answering to your idea of game-keeper."

"And what have they all to do?" asked Hamilton.

"Can you not imagine the care of all these woods giving a number of people employment?" asked Baron Z., looking round him. "The never-ending felling and drifting, and selling and planting; the corrections of the rivers used for drifting; the care of the game, and a hundred other things, which I do not just now remember. The *Förstwesen*, as we call it here, requires as much, and as peculiar study, at the University, as theology, philosophy, law, physic, or any other branch of learning. Had I been given my choice, I should have preferred it to all others."

"And what did you study? I mean especially?"

"Law," answered Baron Z., and while he spoke, the carriage rolled into the paved court of Hohenfels.

CHAPTER XV.

A DISCOURSE.

There had been a thunder storm during the night, and the rain descended the next morning in torrents. "I fear Hamilton, our party must be put off for a short time!" observed Baron Z., as he walked from one window to the other, in a disconsolate manner, after breakfast. "How I detest a hopeless day of this kind!"

"I remember," said A. Z., "that when I was an accomplished young lady, I rather liked a day of rain when I had a drawing to finish, or a new song to study—I do not dislike it to-day either, but for a very different reason. Had it been fine, I must have gone to the Alp, to do the honours of my dairy to Mr. Hamilton, and now, without any incivility on my part, I can stay at home and

quietly inspect the making of a hundred weight of soap, which cannot be any longer delayed, and I expect," she added, turning to Hamilton, "or rather I hope, on your way from the brewery, where of course you will go to smoke with Herrmann, you will visit me—in the wash-house!"

"And can you really make soap?" asked Hamilton, rather surprised.

"I really can, and really do, as you shall see—but, perhaps, you don't care about soap boiling?"

"I—rather hoped—that, perhaps, to-day you would have had time to talk to me about——."

"Oh! I always find time to talk," said A. Z., "my soap will be ready before dinner, it was begun yesterday evening, and has been boiling all the morning, so you see after our coffee we shall have the whole afternoon, and no chance of visitors!"

Just as all the bells in the neighbourhood were chiming noon, Hamilton walked into the wash-house, and there found A. Z., standing beside an immense boiler, filled with a substance very much resembling porridge, she was examining some of it, as it trickled down a piece of flat wood, which she held in her hand, and having dipped her finger into it, and found that it formed what she called a thimble, she appeared satisfied. Some few directions she gave to a little old woman, who seemed very learned on the subject of soap boil-

ing, and then she wound her way through the surrounding tubs and buckets and pails to Hamilton, and with him went unceremoniously to dinner.

When Hamilton, a couple of hours afterwards, joined A. Z. in the drawing room, he found her turning over the last leaves of his journal, as she sat in a large arm chair, beside the slightly heated stove—she turned round immediately and observed, “well, Mr. Hamilton you ‘rather—hoped I should find time to talk.’ I have time now, and only wait to hear what is to be the subject of conversation.”

He drew a chair close to her, and said, “first of all—your opinion of Hildegard. Does she care for me?”

“I am afraid she does,” answered A. Z.

“How can you say, ‘afraid,’ when you know it is what I most wish—my only chance of happiness! I fear nothing but a refusal now. Have you not observed that she has never said a word which could make me for a moment imagine, she cared in the least for me?”

“Judge her actions, and not her words,” answered A. Z.

“And if her actions should denote more friendship than love?”

“The friendship of a girl of eighteen, for a man of one or two and twenty, is very apt to degenerate into love.”

"And you call that degenerating?"

A. Z. nodded her head, and said, "we have not time to discuss that matter now, nor is it necessary; but there is something I should like to say to you, if you will allow me."

"I allow you—wish you to say anything—everything you please."

"Before I read your journal," she continued, turning quite round to him, "I was disposed only to think of you, and your interests, and recommended you to return home, without again seeing Mademoiselle Rosenberg, or entering into any engagement with her. I give you the same advice now—but—for her sake—on her account!"

"And this you say, supposing her attached to me, and knowing that I am willing to sacrifice everything I most value for her!" said Hamilton.

"Yes, I consider the whole affair as the purest specimen of first love that it is possible to imagine; so sincere on both sides, that were there no impediments to your marriage, I think you might pass your lives very happily together; but the sacrifices you are about to make, she will not, I fear, be able properly to estimate, and you must be very different from most young men of your age, and position in the world, if you have steadiness enough, after two whole years' absence, to return here, change all your habits, and bury

yourself in these mountains for the rest of your life!"

"I think—I am almost sure, that for Hildegard I can do so."

"If you do, I shall have a colossal respect for your character; but in the mean time forgive my doubting it. Your uncle will send you to Paris, give you unlimited command of money, the temptations are great there, and with your brother John, and your cousin Harry as companions, I fear that at the end of the first year, you will write Mademoiselle Rosenberg a letter to say, "that finding it impossible to obtain the consent of your family to your union, you will not *drag the woman you love into poverty!*" I believe this is the usual phrase used on such occasions? And you can do this, without even incurring the censure of the world, for who knows anything of Hildegard? No one will ever hear that for your sake, she has refused Max Zedwitz, and that she will again do so, if engaged to you, is a matter of course; and no one will know that your desertion will condemn her either to being a governess, or to a nunnery for the rest of her life, for she will never marry a Major Stultz, or a Förster Weidmann!" A. Z. paused, but as Hamilton did not speak, she continued, "I see my doubts rather offend you, but such conduct is, I am sorry to say, common,

and I know you too little to estimate your character as it, perhaps, deserves. And now let us consider the other side of the question—I mean Hildegarde's—she has never, you say, betrayed herself to you, still less, I am sure, to any one else. To most women, the feeling of wounded pride, the sense of shame at being publicly slighted, and forsaken, is quite as painful to bear as the real loss of the love, on which all their visions of future happiness is built—all this may still be spared Hildegarde. You have left her without explanation, she thinks highly of you, for she does not know that you could have acted otherwise than as you have done—none of her family have the least idea that she cares for you, she even flatters herself that you are not aware of it—she will long remember you after you have ceased to think of her, but the remembrance will be unmixed with pain. When Maximilian again meets her, she will tell him that she never can return his affection, that she never can feel anything but friendship for him—but—she will marry him, make an excellent wife too—and may, some fine day in this room, beside this very stove, quietly talk of you, and wonder that she could ever have preferred any one to her excellent husband, whom we may suppose sitting just where you are now!”

“ Really a most agreeable picture,” cried Ha-

milton with ill-concealed irritation of manner.

"And pray what is to become of me?"

"I have already said, you will forget more quickly than she can; and so, after enjoying the world and its pomps and vanities for a few years, you will marry a Lady Jane or Lady Mary Somebody, who will be quite as amiable—if not as beautiful as Hildegarde!"

"You are considering this affair much too lightly," cried Hamilton, starting from his chair almost angrily, "You talk as if it were a mere flirtation!"

"No: I have ceased to consider it such," rejoined A. Z. gravely. "I wish to save you from self-reproach, and Hildegarde from real unhappiness hereafter. The bitterness of parting is now over on both sides. With the best intentions in the world circumstances might induce you to write the letter I spoke of—Hildegarde's feelings now are very different from what they will be when she has accustomed herself to think of you as her companion for life. I would willingly save her youth from a blight which, however her pride and strength of mind may enable her to conceal it, will prevent the development of all her good qualities, and perhaps turn her generous confidence into suspicious distrust, her warmth of heart into callousness for ever—but I have now said enough—

too much, perhaps ;” and she walked to the window, which she opened, to ask Baron Z. who was in the court-yard, what he thought of the weather.

“ No chance of a change,” he answered, “ the barometer is still falling, and it will not clear up until there is snow on the mountain tops, most probably.”

“ That is the only disagreeable thing in a mountainous country,” observed A. Z., turning to Hamilton. “ When it begins to rain, it never knows how or when to stop. I am sorry, on your account, that the fine weather has not lasted a little longer ; but to-morrow we shall have a box of new books, and perhaps you may find something to interest you among them.”

“ I am sure,” said Hamilton, “ that you will agree with me in thinking that I ought not to delay my return to Munich even a day longer, now that I have quite decided on my future plans. I wish, if possible, to prevent Hildegarde from going to Frankfort, where that Mademoiselle Hortense intended to send her.”

“ I scarcely know what I ought to say,” replied A. Z. “ It is not to be expected that you will remain here listening to my long stories and the rain pattering against the windows, when you have a good excuse for leaving.”

“ A reason—not an excuse,” said Hamilton.

“ Well then,” said A. Z. as she closed the window, “ though I do not ask you to give me a lock of your hair, I feel so much interested in your affairs, that I hope you will ‘ Trust me, and let me know your love’s success,’ in a few lines which you may find time to write to me after you have reached home.”

CHAPTER XVI.

ANOTHER KIND OF DISCOURSE.

TWENTY-FOUR hours afterwards Hamilton was in Munich, on his way to Major Stultz'. He had not yet taken leave of Crescenz, and hoped, when ostensibly doing so, to obtain from her some information about her sister's plans and prospects. His old acquaintance, Walburg, was delighted to see him, informed him that "her mistress was at home, quite alone—the major had gone to sup with some officers who had been in Russia with him;" and, while speaking, she threw open the drawing-room door. Crescenz turned round, and then, with a blush of pleasure, rose quickly and advanced towards Hamilton, exclaiming, "I knew you would not leave Bavaria without coming to see me! I said so to Blasius, and to Hildegarde too!"

"So you have spent another day at the Iron-Works, and can tell me how they all are."

"No:" replied Crescenz; and the smile faded from her features as she added, "Hildegarde was here, on her way to Frankfort."

"So she is gone——actually gone!" cried Hamilton.

"She left us the day before yesterday—Blasius says he is glad our parting is over, for I could do nothing but cry all the time she was here."

"And Hildegarde," asked Hamilton.

"She appeared quite contented with her future prospects, and tried to make me so too."

"Quite contented," repeated Hamilton.

"Yes: Blasius says she has not much feeling, and that I am a fool to waste so much affection on her: but he does not know how kind she was to me for so many years at school, helping me out of all my difficulties, and taking my part on all occasions—he has no idea what Hildegarde can be to those she loves!"

"Nor I either," said Hamilton.

"Of course not," said Crescenz, smiling, "as she only latterly began to like you, but for ten years she was everything to me! After we left school, indeed, or rather from the time we were at Seon, she changed a good deal, certainly. You know the time that——"

"I know," said Hamilton.

"But when she was here last week, she was just what she used to be: I could have fancied we had gone back two or three years of our lives."

"So she was quite cheerful!" said Hamilton, with a constrained smile. "It seems she felt no regret at quitting the Iron Works?"

"Not much, I should think, when you were no longer there," answered Crescenz.

"What! What do you mean?" asked Hamilton, eagerly.

"Why, as you were the only person who could talk to her—she must have found it very dull after you were gone, I suppose."

"Oh!" said Hamilton, "is that all? Perhaps she did not even say as much—did not speak of me at all!"

"Oh yes; we often spoke of you," said Crescenz, nodding her head.

"I flattered myself, at one time, that Hildegarde liked me——" began Hamilton.

"She does like you—she said so repeatedly, and quite agreed with me in everything about you, but she does not like you as Blasius thought she would when you first went to the Iron Works—he said then it was very inconsiderate of mamma to take you there—that she ought to have insisted on your leaving her house when papa died!"

"She did propose my leaving," said Hamilton.

"Yes, I know—that was after Blasius had spoken to her—and he was so angry, when he heard you were going to the country, after all! He said—he said—"

"What?" asked Hamilton.

"That with such opportunities, he should not be at all surprised if you and Hildegard went to—the—devil! He sometimes does use such very improper words!"

Hamilton could not help smiling.

"You think I am joking," she continued, "but I assure you, he said such dreadful things, that I cannot repeat them—and I was so glad when I went to the Iron Works, to perceive that Hildegard did not like you—in that way——"

"In what way?" asked Hamilton, irresistibly impelled to talk to her as he had done in former times. She blushed so deeply however, and became so painfully confused, that he added gravely, "You mean that you saw she only liked me as an acquaintance, or friend, and I believe you are right."

"Yes, that is exactly what I meant," said Crescenz, apparently greatly relieved, "for that last day, when you seemed to like Lina Berger more than you had ever done either of us, she did

not in the least mind it—quite laughed at the idea !”

“ Did she !” said Hamilton with a look of annoyance, which Crescenz alone could have failed to observe.

“ Hildegarde never will tell me anything,” she continued, but I have made a discovery all the same !”

“ Have you ?” cried Hamilton, with a look of interest, which her observations were seldom calculated to produce, “ What is it ?”

“ I have found out at last, who it is that she really loves.”

“ Indeed ! Are you quite sure !”

“ You shall hear how I found it out. Lina Berger came here, not to take leave of Hildegarde, for you know they dislike each other—but because she wished to hear something about you. Now Hildegarde answered all her questions with the greatest composure, and when Lina found that she could not embarrass or annoy her about you, she suddenly turned the conversation and spoke of Count Zedwitz—the moment she pronounced his name Hildegarde’s whole countenance changed, and then Lina went on, and told her that the old Count was dying, that Dr. Berger had been several times to see him, and said he could not live more than a week or ten days—and that as

his son had been written for, and was probably on his way home, she now seriously advised Hildegarde not to leave Munich, or at least Bavaria, until all chance was over of his renewing his proposal of marriage to her—that is, if she had still the slightest hope that such unheard of good fortune was in store for her—above all things, she ought to avoid going to Frankfort, as notwithstanding all Count Zedwitz' professions of liberality, the idea of her having been a governess, *might* be revolting to him!

“Poor dear Hildegarde,” cried Hamilton compassionately, “Was she very angry?”

“She became so pale and agitated, that I expected some terrible scene, such as we used to have at school; but to my great surprise, she thanked Lina for her good advice, though she did not mean to follow it, said she considered being a governess no sort of a disgrace—rather the contrary, as it led to the supposition at least, that her acquirements were more than common—and that what Count Zedwitz might think on the subject, was at present, a matter of indifference to her—and then she went out of the room, and did not return until Lina was gone.”

“But surely, you do not infer from this, that she loves Zedwitz,” cried Hamilton cheerfully.

"It seems to me as if almost the contrary conclusion might be drawn."

"You have not heard all," said Crescenz. "After Lina was gone—though I knew she had only been trying to vex Hildegarde—I thought the advice might be good, as Blasius had said several times that it would be such an excellent thing if that cross proud old Count would die at once, and leave his son at liberty to marry Hildegarde. It is very wrong to wish any body to die, but Blasius does not mind saying things of that kind—I don't think he means all he says, though, about the devil, or people being damned—it would be very terrible if he did—and I am sure, he learned all those odious expressions in that frightful Russian campaign—"

"Well a— and so—" said Hamilton, "when Hildegarde again came into the room, you probably recommended her remaining here?"

"Yes—but you know, I never could expect Hildegarde to follow my advice! and when she refused, I only just ventured in a whisper, to ask her if she thought that Count Zedwitz still loved her—and she said 'yes, better than any one ever loved, or will love me—better than I deserve,' and then she went to the window and pretended to look out, but I saw that she was crying—I am quite sure she has made up

her mind to marry him, but I don't understand why she is so unhappy about it, especially as he is a Count, and Hildegard is so fond of rank!"

"Is she!" said Hamilton, absently.

"Oh yes, rank, riches, station, and somebody to love her exclusively—and Count Zedwitz can give her all these things you know!"

"Very true—your arguments are conclusive," said Hamilton, "and now it is time for me to go——"

"But you will come again?" said Crescenz, "you will come to take leave of Blasius?"

Hamilton shook his head.

"And are you really going away for ever?" asked Crescenz, and her eyes filled with tears as added in a slightly tremulous voice, "Hildegard said we should never hear of, never see you again!"

"And she said it I am sure with less regret than you do!" exclaimed Hamilton, bitterly.

"I dare say you think me very foolish," said Crescenz, trying to smile while large tears coursed each other down her cheeks.

"I think you very kind," said Hamilton.

"If Blasius were at home, you would have staid a little longer, perhaps—I wish Blasius were here."

Hamilton thought it was quite as well he was

not, but he did not say so ; and after taking leave of her, much more affectionately than he had dared to do of her sister, he left the house considerably more thoughtful than he had entered it.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE JOURNEY HOME COMMENCES.

HAMILTON left Munich the next day in the mail for Frankfort ; he had secured the place beside the conductor in the front part of the coach, which formed a kind of open carriage, and where he intended to smoke, and think, and sleep undisturbed. His late conversation with Crescenz had made a deep impression on him, it had again filled his mind with doubts and fears, which deprived him of his habitual cheerfulness, while his usual source of amusement when travelling—studying the characters or foibles of his companions, had lost all interest for him. He did not ask the name or condition of any one of the persons with whom he moved under the same roof a whole night and two days, and no one

contradicted the young student, who on leaving at Wurtzburg, observed with a glance towards Hamilton "As unsociable a fellow as ever I met! A thorough Englishman!"

He wandered about the streets until the coach was again ready to start, and then, although the weather had completely cleared up, and the country refreshed by the rain, was by no means uninteresting, he sunk back into his corner, and overpowered by weariness, fell fast asleep. When he awoke it was quite dark, and as he raised himself slowly from his slumbers, the conductor called out "Halt!—who is booked for Aschaffenburg? Who gets out here?"

Some passenger from the inside of the coach spoke, and Hamilton asked, "Is there a good hotel here?"

"Very good."

"Then let me out—my legs are cramped, and my head and shoulders battered and bruised—I say, Hans, you can go on to Frankfort and bespeak rooms for me at the Hotel d'Angleterre. Give me my carpet bag and dressing case, as fast as you can," and Hamilton was stamping his feet on the ground, with a feeling of relief amounting to pleasure, when a man with a lantern came up to him, and demanded his passport.

"My passport?—directly.—I shall be in Frank-

fort about twelve o'clock to-morrow, Hans," cried Hamilton, as the coach drove off, and having delivered up his passport, he watched the man with the lantern enter an adjacent house, saw the light pass from one window to the other, until it finally disappeared, and all was dark.

"This is pleasant," he said, looking round him, "and I don't know the way to the hotel, or even the name of it!"

"I'm here sir, with a wheelbarrow for the luggage," said a voice near him, and Hamilton's eyes now becoming accustomed to the darkness, he perceived a man standing close to him, and a dark figure at a little distance sitting among some trunks and boxes.

"Can you shew me the way to the best hotel?" asked Hamilton.

"To be sure I can—for what else am I here every night wet or dry!" answered the man, good-humouredly, as he placed Hamilton's luggage in the wheelbarrow. "If you have no objection, sir, I'll take the lady's things too."

"By all means," said Hamilton, looking towards the dark figure, which now rose and endeavoured to assist the man to move a rather large trunk.

"Allow me," said Hamilton, instantly taking her place; and every thing was soon arranged.

“Thank you a thousand times,” whispered the lady, placing her arm within his almost familiarly; and Hamilton, half surprised, half amused, looked somewhat curiously at his companion as she afterwards unreservedly drew closer to him, and at last clasped her small well-gloved hands over his arm. They followed for some minutes in silence the man with the wheelbarrow, who trudged on before them whistling, but as they drew near one of the miserable street lamps Hamilton lent forward and endeavoured, rather unceremoniously to peer under his companions bonnet, a thick black veil rendered the effort fruitless.

“You wish to see my face,” she said, in a voice that made him stop suddenly, with an exclamation of astonishment; and when she pushed aside her veil the flickering light played dimly over the well-known features of Hildegarde.

And where were Hamilton’s doubts and fears at that moment?—removed?—dispersed? No; but they were dormant—sleeping as soundly, perhaps as uneasily as he had been doing about an hour before. He scarcely understood Hildegarde as with repeated assurances that she was very, very, glad to see him again, she incoherently related, that she had travelled to Wurtzburg with some friends of Mademoiselle Hortense’s, they had been very kind, and had insisted on her remaining

with them a couple of days, to recover from the fatigues of her night journey; that they had accompanied her to the coach, and advised her to sleep at Aschaffenburg; that she had recognised Hamilton's voice when speaking to Hans, had seen his face when the man demanded his passport, "and then," she added, "I knew that all my difficulties about travelling were at an end; so I sat down quietly on my trunk, and waited to see when you would recognise me!"

"How could I recognise your voice when you whispered, or your face, when covered with that impervious veil? Indeed it is impossible to see anything at a few feet distance from these lamps which seem but intended to make the 'darkness visible.' The moment you spoke I knew you."

"That I expected," said Hildegard; "otherwise I should have been tempted to preserve my incognito a little longer."

"I am very glad you did not—but where is the man with our bags and boxes?" he cried, looking round. He was no longer visible, though they could still indistinctly hear the sound of the jogging of the wheelbarrow over the rough paving stones in the distance. With a merry laugh they ran together down the street, and overtook him just as he rolled his clumsy little vehicle under an

archway, lighted by two handsome lamps, and where their arrival was immediately announced by the ringing of a large bell.

They reached Frankfort the next day, just in time to dine at the *table d'hôte*; but Hildegarde's appearance caused so many inquiries, that Hamilton followed her to her room to advise her not dining there in future.

"I shall scarcely be here to-morrow," she said, pushing back her bonnet, while she rummaged a little writing desk for some paper—"Oh! here it is," she added, "Hortense's letter of introduction. I am sure you will be so kind as to go with me to find out the house of this lady—this Baroness Waldorf!"

"Who?" cried Hamilton.

"Baroness Waldorf."

"Why did you not tell me it was to her you were going?"

"Because I did not think it could interest you in any way—I never heard you speak of her. Have you seen her? Do you know anything about her?"

"I met her at Edelfhof—Zedwitz is guardian to her daughter."

"Oh tell me something about her," cried Hildegarde, eagerly, to Hamilton's surprise quite indifferent to the latter part of his speech. "Tell

me all you know about her. Is she a person to whom I am likely to become attached?"

"I don't know—I rather think not, Oh Hildegarde, let me advise you, as a friend, to give up this plan altogether, and go back to your step-mother—If you would only listen to me patiently for ten minutes——"

"I cannot listen to you," said Hildegarde, interrupting him, "for I have made an engagement—a promise to remain a whole year under all circumstances with the Baroness Waldorf. She would not make any other sort of agreement, as she is going to Florence for the winter. She alone can release me from this promise—but I cannot say I wish it, as I rather enjoy the idea of going to Italy."

"Under other circumstances I could easily imagine it."

"And under what other circumstances am I likely to see Italy—or, even the Rhine, near as it now is to me?"

Hamilton was silent.

"Let us go," said Hildegarde, taking up her gloves. "You will not, I am sure, try to dissuade me any longer, when I tell you that I cannot endure the life I should have to lead at the Iron Works; my habits and education have unfortunately made me totally unfit for it. I have made

the trial, and must now with regret confess, that the details of domestic life are not only tiresome, but, absolutely, disgusting to me !”

“ So, then,” said Hamilton, “ you have discovered that riches are necessary to your happiness ?”

“ Not exactly riches,” replied Hildegarde, little aware of the importance attached to her answer, “ but something beyond the actual means of subsistence—enough at least to insure me from the vulgar cares of life, and enable me to associate with people whose habits and manners are similar to mine.”

“ And how much would be necessary for this ?” asked Hamilton, gravely.

“ Oh indeed I don’t know,” she answered carelessly, laughing, “ nor is it necessary to calculate. That I have it not is certain ; and in being a governess I see the only means of satisfying my wishes at present, and securing a competence hereafter. If I remain ten years with the Baroness Waldorf, I shall receive a pension for the rest of my life.”

“ And do you think you could not endure these vulgar cares of life, as you call them, even with a person you loved ?” asked Hamilton, still more earnestly.

“ I shall never be tried in that way,” answered

Hildegard firmly, and while she walked on, wholly occupied with her immediate concerns, Hamilton altogether misunderstanding the meaning of her words, concluded she referred to a marriage with Zedwitz at some future period. Thus unconsciously tormenting each other, they reached the Baroness Waldorf's house, and finding a burly porter lounging outside the door, they asked if she were at home.

"No—she was not—she had gone to Mayence."

"And when is she expected to return," asked Hildegard, anxiously.

"We do not in the least know, Mademoiselle, she left very suddenly, in consequence of a letter which she received. She is sometimes not more than a few days absent, and most of the carriages and horses are still here. Who shall I say——?"

"It is of no consequence," said Hamilton, "we merely wished to know if a young lady from Munich was not expected about this time?"

The man said he would inquire, entered the house, but returned almost directly, saying, that no one was expected excepting perhaps Count Zedwitz on his way home.

Hamilton and Hildegard walked on together for some minutes in silence; at length the latter observed, half inquiringly, "I suppose I have no

right to be offended with this Baroness Waldorf? It must have been urgent business which could make her leave Frankfort, just when she appointed me to be here?"

"I should think so," said Hamilton, "but she might have made some arrangement for your reception during her absence. This thoughtlessness about you will scarcely prepossess you in her favour."

"Rich people are seldom considerate," began Hildegard, as if she intended to moralize: but suddenly stopping, she added, "You are right—she has placed me in a very unpleasant position—if she do not return in a day or two I shall neither have the means of remaining here, or going home!"

"Our fortunate meeting at Aschaffenburg," said Hamilton, "will save you from all annoyances of that description, as you know I can arrange everything with your mother. At all events, I shall not leave you now until you are either at home again, or residing with this—to say the least—very thoughtless person."

"But will not delay inconvenience you?" asked Hildegard.

"Not in the least. As far as I am concerned I should be glad that the Baroness would not return for six weeks! All places are alike to me where

you are ; and much as we were together at the Iron Works, you have more time to bestow on me here ; and therefore I am proportionably happier."

This kind of speech she never answered ; and after a short pause Hamilton proposed showing her the gardens which surrounded the town, and in their shady walks they wandered until evening.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHAT OCCURRED AT THE HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE, IN
FRANKFORT.

THE next day after dinner, while Hamilton went to his banker's, Hildegard looked out of her window, and watched, with a sort of quiet indifference, the arrival of two travelling carriages at the hotel. Out of the first, sprang a tall large man, who merely raising two fingers to his travelling cap by way of salutation, instantly disappeared—and even while the heated and tired horses were still being led up and down the yard, others were brought out, and the servant after great bustling and hurrying, followed his master into the hotel. Again the cracking of whips and ringing of bells became audible, and another and larger carriage arrived—decidedly English. The well-built vehicle swung easily with all its weight of imperials and servants' seats behind, and out of it stepped

a tall, thin gentleman, with a grey hat, a grey coat, grey trousers, grey gaiters, and grey whiskers ! An elderly lady followed, her face half concealed by her pendant lace veil, and two young and pretty girls, stopped for a moment to inspect the building they were about to enter. Hildegard looked at her watch, it was the hour that Hamilton told her he would return, so she locked her door, and began slowly to walk along the corridor and descend the stairs. The English family were just turning into a large suite of rooms on the first floor as she passed—the gentleman in grey had stopped at the door, his hat fast on his head ; he turned to his wife, who was entering, and observed quite loudly enough for Hildegard to hear, “ By Jove, that’s the handsomest girl I have seen for a long time ! ” The lady turned round and deliberately raised her *lorgnette* to her eye, while their two daughters after a hasty glance, exclaimed, “ Oh, papa, I really do think she understood you.” Hildegard walked quickly on, but met so many servants and strangers, that she took refuge at last in the large dining-room, which at that hour, was generally quite unoccupied.

One solitary individual sat at the enormous table, he seemed to have been dining, and Hildegard walked to one of the windows without looking at him. Soon after, she heard him striding

up and down the room, and as a waiter entered with some fruit and *confitures*, he asked rather impatiently, "Has my servant not yet dined? Tell him to make haste—he knows we have no time to lose!"

The voice was familiar to Hildegarde, she unconsciously turned round to look at the speaker, and was instantly recognized by Count Zedwitz, who with a look of astonishment, hurried towards her, exclaiming "Mademoiselle Rosenberg! What on earth has brought you to Frankfort?"

"I came here intending to go to a Baroness Waldorf, as governess to her daughter—she has gone to Mayence, I hear, and—"

"And you are here alone, unprotected, and I cannot offer to stay with you,—I do not know if you have heard that my father is dying—no hope whatever of his recovery, I only received the intelligence yesterday, and am now travelling night and day, to reach home in time to see him once more!"

At this moment the servant entered to say, that the carriage was ready.

"Very well—you may go—and—shut the door—Hildegarde, I mean Mademoiselle Rosenberg—do not remain here. Give up this idea of going to Ida Waldorf—it will never answer—believe me, you will be most unhappy!"

"It must answer," said Hildegarde, "and I

shall not be unhappy, for the idea of being a governess, is familiar to me from my infancy, and has therefore lost all its terrors."

"Excuse my questioning you," cried Zedwitz quickly, "but may I ask how you happened to become acquainted with the Baroness Waldorf?"

"I do not know her at all—I never saw her—it was all arranged by Mademoiselle Hortense, one of the governesses of our school."

"Did the Baroness Waldorf know your name?" asked Zedwitz, eagerly.

"At first, perhaps not," answered Hildegarde, with a look of surprise, "but in the letter which told her that I had left Munich, Mademoiselle Hortense must have mentioned it—I should think my name a matter of very little importance!"

"In this instance, you are mistaken—I—I fear the Baroness is not likely to return for some time—I—"

"Her servant said she would not be long absent—that her leaving was quite a sudden thing," observed Hildegarde.

"Her leaving when she expected you, was unpardonable, cruel, ungenerous!" exclaimed Zedwitz, vehemently.

"I was rather shocked at first myself, but I

afterwards thought she had not perhaps received the letter in time——”

“She did receive it, I am sure she did—it was the letter which—Oh, Mademoiselle Rosenberg, do not remain here any longer—return to your relations, return with me now—at once.”

Hildegarde blushed intensely.

“I shall send my servant with the carriage,” he added quickly, “and we can travel in the diligence, or in any way you please.”

“You are very kind,” said Hildegarde, “but I consider myself engaged to this Baroness Waldorf, and until I hear from her——”

“You will not hear from her, you will never hear from her!” he cried impatiently, “and I must leave you—I cannot, dare not delay my return home now!”

Again Hildegarde blushed, she endeavoured to name Hamilton, but the words died on her lips, and her confusion increased every moment. Some people began to stray into the room, and Zedwitz added in an agitated whisper, “God forgive me, for thinking of anything but my father when he is lying on his death-bed—the peculiarity of our position must be my excuse for telling you at such a time, that my feelings towards you are unchanged, unchangeable. Return to your family and let me hope that time may so far over-

come your dislike, or indifference, whichever it be—”

“Oh, Count Zedwitz, it is neither,” said Hildegarde, with evident effort. “I should be unworthy of such regard as you feel for me, were I not now to tell you that—I have—long—loved another.”

“Hamilton of course—I always feared it.”

Hildegarde was silent.

“If you are engaged to him, tell me so—it is the only means of effectually crushing all my hopes at once!”

“We have no engagement, he cannot enter into any—he does not even know that I regard him otherwise than as a friend!”

“Then listen to me Hildegarde, notwithstanding all the admiration, all the love which he undoubtedly feels for you now—when he has been some time at home among the friends and companions of his youth—he will—forget you!”

“I think he will,” said Hildegarde, with a deep sigh.

“And you too, will forget this youthful fancy,” continued Zedwitz.

“Youthful fancy!” she repeated slowly, “I fear, I have neither youthful fancies, nor youthful feelings—I have had no youth!”

“It will come like a late spring, and bestow on

you at once those blessings which others receive so gradually, that they are insensible to them."

Hildegarde shook her head, and turned to the window. Zedwitz seemed to wish to say something which embarrassed him. "In case you should find this hotel more expensive than you expected," he began in a hesitating manner.

"Oh, not at all expensive," said Hildegarde. "I had no idea one could live so cheaply at such a place!"

Zedwitz looked surprised, he would have been more so if he had seen the bill which she had paid Hamilton with such childish satisfaction a couple of hours before. It is needless to say that it had been written by him, as soon as he had discovered that she had not the most remote idea of the expenses of travelling, that he had taken advantage of her ignorance to prevent her feeling any annoyance or uneasiness.

"I cannot tell you how unwilling I am to leave you," said Zedwitz, after a pause; "but go I must. Until we meet again, let me indulge the hope that a time may come ——"

Just at that moment the hotel keeper entered the room, and approached the window where they were standing. Zedwitz turned round, and Hildegarde in her anxiety to undeceive him, and fearing he was leaving her under a false impression,

stretched out her hand to detain him ; the action was misunderstood, he caught it between both his, and while she endeavoured in vain to stammer a few words of explanation, he whispered "Thank you a thousand times, you do not know how even this faint ray of hope will lighten the gloominess of my present journey !"

He then took the innkeeper aside, and spoke long and earnestly to him about her, said he knew her family—requested him to let her know every opportunity that might offer for a return to Munich in respectable society. Gave him his address, the name of his banker, and unlimited credit on her account ; and just as the innkeeper with an only half suppressed smile of amusement, was about to explain to him that he need not be so uneasy about the lady, as she was already under the protection of a young Englishman, Zedwitz reproaching himself for the delay which had occurred, sprang into the carriage, and a moment after it rolled from under the archway past the window where Hildegard still stood, a prey to the most distressing and contending emotions.

After waiting more than half an hour longer, and Hamilton not appearing, she retired to her room, supposing some unexpected business had detained him ; but when several hours elapsed,

and he was still absent, she became uneasy. A feeling of delicacy prevented her from making any enquiries, and she sat at her window, long after dusk, trying to discover him in every tall, dark figure she saw moving near the entrance or in the court below. A sensation of utter loneliness came over her, thoughts of the most melancholy description chased each other through her mind; when from a reverie of this kind, she recognized the well known quick step, and a low knock at her door, made her conscious that Hamilton was near; all her painful reminiscences—uncertainties—Zedwitz—everything was, in a moment, forgotten; and she rose quickly and joyously from her chair to meet him. It was too dark for Hamilton to see the tears which still lingered in her long eyelashes, and too dark for her to observe the flushed and irritated expression of his whole countenance.

“Shall I light the candles?” she asked cheerfully.

“If you wish it, but I prefer the room as it is.”

She sat down near him, and after a pause observed, “you were long absent, was there any difficulty at the bankers?”

“None whatever.” Another pause, then suddenly turning towards her, he said quickly, “I have been thinking that as the Baroness Waldorf

has a house at Mayence, she may be longer absent than her servants supposed. A few hours would take you to Mayence !”

“Do you think it necessary for me to follow her there ?”

“Not exactly necessary, but why not ? You have often wished to see the Rhine.”

“Oh, it would be too delightful !” exclaimed Hildegarde.

“If you think so,” said Hamilton, every trace of annoyance disappearing from his face ; “why, the sooner we go the better.”

“But the expense,” said Hildegarde, hesitatingly.

“Will not be greater than remaining here, do not let that weigh with you for a moment.”

“Perhaps I ought to write to my mother, or Hortense ?”

“You cannot have an answer for several days, and it is better to wait until you have seen the Baroness Waldorf ; I should think whether you were here or at Mayence, must be a matter of indifference to them, and I am sure your mother would be quite satisfied if she knew that you were under my care !”

“That I think too,” said Hildegarde, “and I should like to put an end to my present state of uncertainty as soon as possible. I do not,” she

continued half laughing, "I do not feel any sort of scruples about travelling with you, I suppose because we have lived so long in the same house, and I know you so well ; but when Count Zedwitz to-day proposed my returning home with him—"

"Zedwitz ! To-day !" repeated Hamilton, amazed.

"Yes. In passing through Frankfort to-day, he dined and changed horses here. I saw him for a few minutes when I was waiting for your return ; he strongly advised me not to go to the Baroness Waldorf, and seemed oddly enough to think she had gone away on purpose."

"Not impossible — not improbable. Did he explain, in any way, the cause of his suspicions ?"

"No, he had not time, his father is dying, and he is, of course, most anxious to get home. He—he went away just as I was going to tell him that you were here ——" she stopped, embarrassed.

"Hildegarde, let us go to Mayence," cried Hamilton, abruptly.

"As early as you please to-morrow morning," she answered, cheerfully.

"Not to-morrow morning—this evening—in an hour—in half an hour !"

"But—but it is night—almost dark already."

"Well, what difference does that make ?"

"They told me never to travel at night, it was

to avoid doing so, that I stopped at Aschaffenburg."

"That was when you were alone, and travelling in a public carriage."

"I do not, however, see any necessity for such haste," she said quietly, and therefore, if you have no objection, I should greatly prefer waiting until morning."

"But I have an objection, and you will greatly oblige me by leaving to-night."

"I suppose you have some very good reason for what appears to me a most unnecessary exercise of the power which chance has given you over me?"

"I *have* a reason," began Hamilton, and there he stopped. How could he tell her that he had recognized his own coat of arms on a carriage in the yard—that he had questioned the courier, who was unpacking it, and discovered that the same uncle who had been in Salzburg the year before, was now on his way to Baden-Baden with his wife and daughters; that he dreaded their discovering Hildegard's being with him, feared the ungenerous conclusions they might draw from her present position, and that, to avoid a chance meeting, he had wandered about the least frequented streets, until the shades of evening, and the certainty of their being engaged at the

tea-table, had enabled him to pass their apartments, with the hope of not being discovered. To attempt an explanation with Hildegarde, would be sufficient to make her insist on his leaving her instantly ; his only chance was to use his personal influence and try to persuade her to leave Frankfurt that night, before they had seen—before the “strangers’ book” had given rise to any enquiries about them.

“Well,” said Hildegarde, “I have surely a right to hear your reason?”

“Right! oh, if we talk of rights, it is you alone who should name the day and hour of departure,—you alone who have a right to dictate ; but I was asking a favour, I wish most particularly to be in Mayence at a very early hour to-morrow.”

“And if we leave at three or four o’clock in the morning, will not that be early enough?”

Hamilton looked only half satisfied.

“I do not like the appearance of going off at night in so sudden and mysterious a manner—not even—with you,” said Hildegarde, candidly.

“Perhaps you are right—but at three o’clock in the morning, if the exertion be not too great——”

“Oh,” said Hildegarde, laughing, “you will find it more difficult to be ready than I shall.”

"Not to-morrow," said Hamilton; "I shall be at your door waiting for you, even before the clock strikes."

And in the morning, when she opened her door, there he stood. He unconsciously stepped lighter as he passed the rooms containing his sleeping relations. Hildegarde pointed to them, and said they were occupied by English people; she had seen them arrive the day before, had passed them on her way down stairs, and, while still talking of the grey man and the veiled lady, Hamilton hurried her into the carriage and they drove off.

CHAPTER XIX.

HALT !

It was still early when Hildegarde and Hamilton reached Mayence ; so early, that, after lingering over their breakfast an unusually long time, the latter said he would make some enquiries about the Baroness Waldorf, and Hildegarde could go to her at a later hour. After a very short absence he returned, and, throwing himself into a chair, exclaimed, "Well, certainly, this is the most unaccountable conduct !"

"What is the matter ?" asked Hildegarde, turning very pale, "has she left Mayence too ?"

"Yes—gone again ; and without leaving any message for you !"

"There must be some extraordinary mistake or confusion, either on her part or Hortense's! I could almost agree with Count Zedwitz and think she was purposely avoiding me, if I had not read the letters which she wrote—her hopes that we should be long together—her regrets that I was not a few years older—her entreaties that Hortense would not let me leave Munich until she had found some person to take charge of me: and now to leave me to wander about after her in this way! So apparently to forget my existence! It is quite incomprehensible!"

"She has gone to Waldorf," said Hamilton, "and a—Waldorf is not far from Coblenz."

"You surely would not advise me to pursue her further!" cried Hildegarde, indignantly.

"Oh, no; I have advised, and still advise you to go home."

"And yet I shall make one effort more, though most unwillingly," said Hildegarde. "I should be ashamed to go home after a wild-goose chase of this kind; I must know at least what to say to my relations. Suppose I were to write to the Baroness, and await her answer here? That will, —that must explain everything."

"Write," said Hamilton, "and we can take it to the post ourselves, when we go out with a *valet de place*, who must show us everything worth seeing. I dare say we can spend two or three days very pleasantly here."

"I shall be dreadfully in your debt!" observed Hildegarde, blushing.

"Not at all," said Hamilton, with the most serious face imaginable. "You have more than enough money for all your expenses here, though perhaps not quite enough to take you home."

The letter was written, and they sallied forth, preceded by a loquacious *valet de place*, to whose remarks, after the first five minutes, they did not pay the slightest attention.

When they were returning to the hotel, by a newly made walk along the banks of the Rhine, Hildegarde stopped to look at a new and beautifully built steamboat, on which there was a placard hung up to say that she would sail the next morning for Cologne.

"Should you like to see the interior, Hildegarde?"

"Oh, of all things!" and the steamboat was

examined with a degree of curiosity, interest, and admiration, of which those accustomed to the sight from infancy, can form no idea. The captain of the ship, who happened to be on board, attracted probably by her appearance, had every drawer and cupboard opened for her inspection, and Hamilton was beginning to find his explanations rather long and tiresome, when he suddenly concluded them, by hoping that she was to be one of his passengers the next day.

"We have not yet quite decided," said Hamilton, laughing at her embarrassment; "though I do not," he added, turning to her, "I do not in fact see what there is to prevent us."

"We shall have fine weather," observed the captain, "and shall be in Cologne in good time in the evening."

"I don't think we could do better, Hildegard," said Hamilton, in a low voice in English.

"I am afraid it would be improper—wrong, without any object but amusement! Just consider for a moment."

"I cannot," said Hamilton, "see any greater impropriety in your passing a day or two in a crowded steamboat, than at an hotel alone with me

—rather less, perhaps, but I deny the impropriety altogether, when I take into consideration that I have been one of your family for the last year, and that you have learned so completely to consider me a friend—almost a relation.”

“That is true,” said Hildegarde, “but still—”

“Then,” continued Hamilton, “you cannot have an answer to your letter for three days at least, we shall be back just in time to receive it. Whether we pass to-morrow night at Cologne or Mayence, is quite unimportant, and I should like to show you the Rhine scenery. Let it be hereafter associated in your mind with your recollections of me !”

This last sentence was pronounced half pathetically, half beseechingly, and—Hildegarde made no further opposition to a plan which accorded but too well with her own inclinations.

We will spare our readers the description of the impression made on her by the Rheingau, Johannisberg, the Lurlei, Coblenz, Rolandseck, the Drachenfels, &c. &c. &c.

“What a pretty room !” said Hildegarde to Hamilton, who had followed her up the stairs of the Hôtel Bellevue at Deutz. “What a pretty

room! We have a complete view of the Rhine, and quite overlook the garden. I really should like to stay here a week—if I dared.”

“I have no objection,” said Hamilton, laughing, “though I have just heard there are so many princes and serene highnesses in the house, that I must sleep on the sofa in this room, if you have no objection; for only this and the bedroom adjoining are to be had.”

The waiter entered the room just at this moment to enquire if M. and Madame would sup there, or at the table d’hôte.

“Here,” said Hamilton, and he blushed deeply, as he turned to Hildegarde, who was sitting on the window stool, but no longer looking at the Rhine, or into the garden, she had fixed her eyes on the door as the waiter closed it, and with parted lips, and slightly contracted brows, seemed expecting to hear more.

“You look quite shocked at that man’s stupid mistake,” said Hamilton, with affected carelessness.

“It was not a stupid mistake, it was a very natural conclusion.”

“You mean on account of the rooms, perhaps? Don’t let that annoy you, for you shall have

undisturbed possession of both—I dare say I can get a bed at one of the inns at the other side of the river, indeed, I should have proposed it at once, only I did not like to leave you here alone.”

“I am afraid you will think me very selfish,” said Hildegarde.

“Not at all.”

“Unnecessarily prudish then?”

“Rather.”

“You are right,” she said with a sigh, “after having gone off with you in this—this very—thoughtless manner, any attempt at prudery is preposterous—ridiculous! There is, in fact, nothing to prevent your sleeping in this room, if you do not fear the sofa being too uncomfortable.”

“There *is* something to prevent me,” said Hamilton, “and that is, you do not wish it. I will go at once across the bridge, and if there be any room to be had, not quite at the other end of the town, I shall not return until morning.”

“But, had you not better wait until after supper?”

“It is scarcely advisable, for at this time of the year, there are so many travellers, that

nothing in the neighbourhood may be to be had; and you know we start early." While he spoke, however, the waiter appeared with the tray, containing their supper, and half-blushing, half-laughing, they sat down together, and between talking and eating, in the course of a few minutes, forgot all about the matter.

It was the waiter, the "stupid man," who was again to remind them of the impropriety of their conduct. He had returned to say that the band of one of the regiments at Cologne, would play in the garden—perhaps Madame would like a table and chair to be kept for her?

Hamilton did not venture to look at his companion, as he refused the offered civility, but snatching up his hat hurried away as fast as he could.

But he returned, and very soon too, and great was his annoyance to find Hildegard already in her room, and the door closed; he walked backwards and forwards, not very patiently or quietly, for about ten minutes, and then knocked.

"Good night," said Hildegard.

"I am sorry to tell you that I have not been able to find a room, excepting in a very out-of-the-

way place ; as the packet leaves so early, and I am so apt to be late, I thought it better to ask you what I should do ?”

“ I am very sorry,” began Hildegarde.

“ So am I,” said Hamilton, “ but as it cannot be helped, I think you might just as well come out here for an hour, and talk over our journey back.”

“ I am going to bed ; I am tired.”

“ Have you any objection to my smoking a cigar, if I open the window ?”

“ None whatever, you may smoke a dozen if you like.”

He opened the window, and leaned out to watch the gay scene, which was passing below him. The garden was crowded with guests, and well lit with candles, protected from the wind by glass globes ; the murmuring of voices, and gay laughter reached him, and had he not still entertained a faint hope of seeing Hildegarde again, he would have joined the revellers, not in the hope of actual enjoyment, but to banish thoughts which were crowding thick upon him, and producing a state of nervous irritation most unusual to him. He felt so provoked at Hildegarde’s tranquil

friendly manner; it contrasted so painfully with his own state of feverish uncertainty, that the jealous vision of Zedwitz un-repulsed, rose, more and more, distinctly before him. Would not the situation of governess be intolerable to one of her proud nature, and after having tried it, would she not joyfully accept the hand of Zedwitz, who she said, "loved her better than any one ever did—better than she deserved!" These thoughts at length became intolerable, and with one bound he was again at her door.

"Hildegarde, the band is beginning to play in the garden, will you not come to listen to it?"

"No thank you."

"But you have not yet gone to bed, I hope?"

There was no answer audible.

"You have not yet gone to bed? I want to speak to you—open the door, I beg—I entreat."

"Whatever you have to say, can be said to-morrow, just as well as now."

"I should rather say it now."

"And I should rather hear it to-morrow."

Hamilton knew her too well to persevere, and returned again to his window, where he remained for more than an hour, unconscious of everything

passing beneath him, and merely hearing a confused sound of instruments, which had the effect of producing an almost painful feeling of fatigue. He closed the window, and looking rather despondingly round the room, which as a dormitory, promised but few comforts, he extinguished the candles, and then threw himself at full length on the sofa: he had been thinking intensely, and as he lay there in the darkened chamber, he resolved that another night should not find him in his present state of uncertainty; and why should he endure it now? Why not know his fate at once? He would insist on Hildegarde's listening to him and answering him too! Starting up, his eyes were instantly riveted on a line of bright light visible under her door; she was still awake; up perhaps. He knocked, and observed in a low voice, as he leaned against the door, "Hildegarde, I cannot sleep!"

"I am so sorry!" she answered, "the sofa I suppose——."

"Yes, the sofa," said Hamilton.

"I wish," she said, coming towards the door,

"I wish I could resign this room to you, but——."

"There is no necessity; give me some of the

pillows, which you do not want, and I shall be quite comfortable."

"How stupid of me, not to have thought of that before!" she exclaimed, opening the door. "When you were absent I could have arranged everything, but the fact is, I have been for the last two hours *thinking*—really thinking, more than I have ever done in my life!"

"So have I," said Hamilton, quite over-looking the pillows she was collecting for him. Suppose we compare thoughts?"

"Not now, to-morrow."

"Now, now; this very instant," he said, seating himself on the sofa, and motioning to her to take the place beside him. She shook her head, and continued standing.

"What on earth do you mean by this reserve—this unusual prudery?" he continued moving towards the side against which she was leaning.

"Nothing," she said, drawing back, "I only think it would be better to defer anything you wish to speak about until to-morrow, it is so late—so very late."

"This is not the first time we have been together at midnight," said Hamilton, laughing, but

as he spoke she blushed so deeply, that he added, seriously, "when there was any impropriety in it, I told you; you may believe me now, when I tell you there is none!"

"You are not quite infallible, I fear," she said, sorrowfully, "for you did not see any impropriety in my travelling alone with you here, and I now both see and feel it, and shall regret it all my life!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Hamilton. "Have I ever said or done anything——"

"Oh no, never — never!" cried Hildegarde, interrupting him.

"Then why withdraw your confidence from me, if I have not done anything to forfeit it?"

"I have the same confidence in you I ever had," she answered, with a sigh, "but I——have unfortunately lost all confidence in myself!"

"How do you mean?"

"I have discovered that it was not a wish to see the Rhine or be in a steamboat which made me leave Mayence with you."

"And what was it then?" cried Hamilton, eagerly.

"It was the desire to be with you—to enjoy your society undisturbed for a few days before we parted for ever!"

"Not for ever," said Hamilton.

"I am ashamed to think how easily I allowed myself to imagine that I ought to follow this Baroness Waldorf to Mayence, still more so to think how soon I stifled my scruples about coming here—and so effectually, too, that the whole obvious impropriety never struck me until this evening, when the waiter——"

"Was guilty of the horrible supposition that you were my wife! Would that be so dreadful?" asked Hamilton.

"The waiter showed me by his simple remark," she continued, without noticing his interruption, "that I ought never to have been with you as I have been under any other circumstances, and I felt condemned at once. I must return home to my stepmother."

"Perhaps, for a couple of years, it would be the best thing you could do," said Hamilton.

"To my stepmother or—to Mademoiselle Hortense?" she said, musingly, as she seated herself

on a chair, and unconsciously moved it towards him. "Of course I have given up all idea of going to the Baroness Waldorf."

"I am glad to hear it. I never liked the plan."

"And I am so sorry to be obliged to give it up!"

"Do not regret it—it would not have answered. I never saw any one for whom the situation of governess was less eligible, notwithstanding your excellent education and extraordinary talent for languages."

"Eligible!" repeated Hildegarde. "You are right. I am no longer eligible—I am no longer fit to direct the education of—of any girl!"

"I hope you will never speak to any one else in this manner," said Hamilton gravely. "You would make people suppose you had been guilty of some serious misdemeanour."

"I have been guilty of a misdemeanour," said Hildegarde, despondingly, "and one which I should think it necessary to confess to the Baroness Waldorf before I entered her house; having done so, I conclude she would refuse to resign her daughter to my care. To avoid the

merited mortification, I shall go home, tell everything to Hortense, and be guided by her advice for the next year or two. And now," she added, "I have only one thing more to observe, and that is, that we ought to repair our thoughtlessness as well as we can, or, rather, avoid a continuation of it, by separating at once. I shall return to Mayence to-morrow, and you must go on to England."

"I will go to—Scotland, if you will go with me, Hildegarde," said Hamilton. "Don't be angry, I am not joking. I have listened to the subject of your two hours' meditation, and now I expect you to listen to mine." And he entered into a long and, all things considered, not very prejudiced exposition of the state of his affairs—informed her of the £5,000 which he should inherit in two years, and after hoping that they could contrive to buy something and live somewhere with that sum, ended, as he had begun, by proposing her going with him to Scotland, and then returning to her mother until he could claim her altogether.

She listened in silence, the expression of deep attention changing by degrees into surprise and

perplexity. It was the first time that the idea of a marriage with him had entered her mind; she had taught herself to consider it so completely an impossibility that his occasional outbursts of passion or tenderness had ceased to make any impression on her. Ashamed of the confession which she had herself so ingenuously made to him just before, and not prepared for the sudden change of feelings which his words produced, she turned away, and, when he paused for an answer, did not even make an attempt to speak.

As Hamilton waited in vain for an answer, his former doubts became certainties—she liked but did not love him. With a difficulty in utterance in strong contrast to his former fluency, he now stammered out his hopes that he had not deceived himself as to the nature of her feelings towards him.

“No—oh no,” answered Hildegarde, but without turning round.

“And you do or will try to love me sufficiently to——”

“Why force me to make unnecessary confessions?” she said with a deep blush; “rather let me ask you when you heard that you would

inherit this fortune which makes you independent. In Frankfort, perhaps ?”

“No,” replied Hamilton, “I knew it when I was a child, and considered it then, though not quite a fortune, certainly a very large sum of money.”

“And is it not a very large sum of money ?”

“For a boy to buy playthings and ponies, yes ; but for a man to live upon——,” he paused ; there was too much intelligence in her eager glance.

“For a man,” she said, “brought up as you have been it is probably too little—nothing !”

“Not so,” cried Hamilton, quickly. “With my present ideas and feelings it is a competence—it is all I require—all I wish.”

“You could, then, have married Crescenz if you had desired it ?” she said, slowly.

“I could never have loved her well enough to induce me to make the sacrifice——”

“The sacrifice ! And it is great—very great perhaps ?”

“It ceases to be one when made for you.”

“And you have only lately—only very lately, perhaps, been able to resolve on this sacrifice ?”

"Let me use your own words, Hildegarde. Do not force me to make unnecessary confessions," said Hamilton, blushing more deeply than she herself had done.

She leaned on the table, and bent her head over her hands. Hamilton felt very uncomfortable. "I expected," he said at length, with some irritation, "I expected that this explanation would have been differently received."

"I wish," she answered, "it had never been made. I would rather have remembered you as I thought you—dependant on your father's will—having no option."

"This is too much!" cried Hamilton, starting from the sofa and striding up and down the room. "I have fallen in your esteem when—but you do not understand."

"Probably not quite, but this is evident to me, the sacrifice must be something enormous—beyond what I can imagine—or you would not have hesitated so long, for—I think—yes—I am sure you—love me?"

Hamilton stopped opposite to her, and exclaimed, "Oh Hildegarde, how can you torture me in this manner!"

"I would rather torture myself," she said, "but," and she looked at him steadily, "but I must nevertheless tell you that I cannot, will not accept your sacrifice."

"Then, Hildegarde, you do not love me," he cried, impetuously.

"Do I not? Can you not see that I am giving the greatest proof of it of which I am capable? Can you not believe that I too can make a sacrifice?"

"I understand and appreciate your motives better than you have done mine," he answered. "Wounded pride is assisting your magnanimity. You are mortified at my having hesitated—deliberated—it was prudent perhaps, but I am heartily sorry for it now. I see it has made you so control your thoughts and inclinations, that friendship and not love is all I have obtained for an affection deserving something more—if you knew but all——" he paused, but as Hildegarde made no attempt to speak, he continued, "I thought when we met at Aschaffenburg, I hoped, from what you said just now—that——Hildegarde!" he cried, vehemently, "You require too much from me; spoiled by adulation, you expect me, without

a struggle, to change my nature, my habits, and my manners! I cannot rave like your cousin——”

Hildegarde became deadly pale, she tried to speak, and moved her lips, but no sound issued from them.

“Nor,” he continued, still more vehemently, “nor can I bear repulses, like Zedwitz!”

Hamilton heard her murmur the words “ungenerous—unjust.”

“Forgive me, Hildegarde, I spoke in anger, and am sorry for it—I ought not to have named your cousin—Can you forgive me?”

She held out her hand in silence.

“Now,” he said, seating himself beside her, “don’t let us ask each other any more questions, or talk any more of sacrifices: but, like a dear love, you will promise to go to England with me to-morrow! won’t you?”

She remained silent, her eyes cast down, while she slowly shook her head.

“You will not?”

“I dare not,” she answered, gently: but observing him again about to start up, she laid her hand on his arm and continued, “Do not ask me

to do what may cause us both unhappiness hereafter. I will enter into an engagement with you on reasonable terms."

"Oh—on reasonable terms!" he repeated, ironically.

"I cannot go on—you are too unkind," she said, while the tears started to her eyes.

A long and painful pause ensued. Hamilton broke it by saying, "Well, what are your terms—anything is better than nothing—name them—I agree to everything, provided I may claim you in two years."

"Even if you do not," said Hildegard, "I promise to forgive you."

"And forget me too, perhaps," said Hamilton, with a forced smile.

"That I—cannot promise: but it is of little consequence what concerns me. You must return home for these two years, weigh well this sacrifice which you must make: it will not be altogether a pecuniary one, for I suppose there is not the slightest chance of obtaining the consent of your family to our marriage; and as you spoke of residing in Germany, I conclude you must give up all your relations and your country too!"

"Go on," said Hamilton, without moving, or looking at her.

"I shall consider myself bound by a promise, which I now freely make, to await your decision—You are free."

"Go on," he again repeated, as he had done before.

"What can you desire more?"

"Why, nothing, though I almost expected you to propose committing to paper in due form, this most rational 'engagement on reasonable terms,' and he drew some paper towards him as he spoke and took up a pen; directly, however, throwing it down, he exclaimed, passionately, "Oh, Hildegarde, this will never do! Much as I admire your decision of character, and freedom from the usual weaknesses of your sex, I—I did hope—I do wish that for once you would be like a girl of your age! I am ready, without regret, to leave all my relations and friends, give up all my hopes of fame or success in life—expatriate myself for ever ——"

"I see, I understand now," cried Hildegarde, interrupting him. "A man has hopes of fame, expectations of success in life. We have nothing

of that kind, and, therefore, our love is perfectly exclusive, all-absorbing."

"Not yours," said Hamilton, "though I confess I expected something of the kind from you, some little enthusiasm at least; however, our contract is made, irrevocably—even though I see and feel that your love is of the very coldest description, in fact scarcely deserving the name."

"Oh, why," cried Hildegard, with all her natural vehemence of manner. "Why is there no sacrifice that I can make to convince you that you are mistaken! There is none I would not make, provided it were not injurious to *you*!"

Hamilton shook his head and turned away.

"You do not believe me? Try me—ask any proof—anything."

He started from his seat, walked to the window, threw it wide open, and leaned as far out as he could in the night air.

All this was too much for Hildegard, her efforts had been great to conceal her feelings, and she perceived she had been misunderstood; her sincere desire to act magnanimously, had been treated with contempt; Hamilton, whom she had

learned to trust without reserve or examination, was displeased, angry with her, perhaps! Perplexed, worried, and wearied, she did, at length, what it would have been better had she done half an hour before; she covered her face with her handkerchief and burst into tears.

The moment Hamilton turned round and perceived that she was crying as heartily as could be desired of any girl of her age, he forgot his anger at her unexpected opposition to his wishes, and rushing towards her, commenced an incoherent succession of excuses, entreaties, and explanations. It would have been difficult for a third person to have known what he meant; Hildegard, however, seemed to understand him perfectly. In a short time she began to look up and smile again, and in about a quarter of an hour they were discussing their future plans in the most amicable manner imaginable. Once more Hamilton had recourse to the pen and paper, but this time it was to make a sketch of the peasant's house near Hohenfels, which was to be their home two years hence. He would write to the Z.'s about it directly, or go to [them, that would be better still!

No ; Hildegarde thought it would be wiser to wait until he could purchase.

"We shall have cows, and calves, and all those sort of things, I suppose ?" said Hamilton.

"I should think so," replied Hildegarde, very gravely.

"I wonder shall we be able to keep a pair of horses ?" said Hamilton.

"Cart horses ? Perhaps we may," answered Hildegarde, merrily.

"No ; but seriously Hildegarde, I should like to know how many servants we shall have ?"

"Very few, I suspect," said Hildegarde, "and therefore, directly I return to my mother, I shall endeavour to learn to be really useful."

"But," said Hamilton, "but these domestic details, which were so disgusting to you—these vulgar cares ——"

"All, all will now be full of interest," said Hildegarde, laughing, "I really feel as if I could even learn to cook !"

"No, no ; I do not wish that, we shall certainly have a cook ! A. Z. seemed to think we could get on quite comfortably if we lived in the country !

I shall not at all mind going out with the plough if it be necessary, and you—you can spin, you know; nothing I admire so much as a graceful figure at a spinning-wheel; you shall have one made of ebony, and—but can you spin?”

“Not yet, but I can easily learn, and in time, I dare say, we shall have a whole press full of linen.”

“Oh, I am sure we shall get on famously; the Z.’s are not at all rich—rather poor I believe, and they are so happy and really live so respectably—they will be our neighbours, and I am sure you will like them.”

“I remember, I rather liked her at Seon, because she lent me books,” observed Hildegarde.

“They will be society for us—that is, if we ever want any. Baron Z. is very cheerful, and his wife is really a very sensible woman. She understands housekeeping, and soapmaking, and all that sort of thing, and will be of great use to you I am sure. Then I shall rent half their alp, and send up our cows there in summer, and then we shall go to look after them, and make little parties with the Z.’s. I must tell you all about that.”

And he did tell her all about that, and so many

other things too—that the night wore away—the candles burnt down, and as at length the flame extinguished itself in the melted wax, they looked at each other in the grey, cold light of breaking day!

The two days which Hamilton and Hildegarde passed in the Rhine steam-boat, on their return to Mayence, were perhaps the happiest of their still so youthful lives. As they sat together, watching the beautiful windings of the river, or glancing up the sides of the wooded mountains, the most perfect confidence was established between them. The events of the last year were discussed with a minuteness which proved either that their memories were exceedingly retentive, or that the most trifling circumstances of that period, had been full of unusual interest to both. Their confessions and explanations were not ended even when they reached Mayence, where Hildegarde found a letter from the Baroness Waldorf; as she gave it to Hamilton, she observed, “after what you told me this morning, I can pardon, though I cannot approve of her conduct—she says, however, that she wrote to Hortense to prevent my leaving Munich, and I am glad of it, as it will save me

from all explanations, and I can shew both my mother and Hortense this letter too—so everything has ended just as we could have wished.”

“Yes,” said Hamilton, “and we will endeavour to believe all the Baroness’s excuses—I dare say she has changed all her plans—and perhaps, she may *not* engage a governess for her daughter, for a year or two—we will also consent to her marriage with Zedwitz,—to whom she is as attached as such a person can be—though she is not likely to rise in his estimation by the proof which she has given of her jealousy,—but what do you mean to do with this order on her banker at Frankfort—this peace-offering which she so diffidently calls her debt?”

“I — should like very much—to return it,” said Hildegarde, hesitatingly.

“I thought so,” said Hamilton, “and in the meanwhile, I can write to A. Z., to let her know that if we are all alive in two years, we shall be together, and to request Baron Z. to enter into negotiations with that Felsenbauer—the peasant on the rocks as he is called. I shall tell A. Z. to send you my journal, it may amuse you to read it, and in the margin you must write whatever is

necessary in explanation, or in short, whatever you think likely to interest us when we look it over at the end of ten or twelve years. A journal you know, like mine, is marvellously improved by age!"

* * * * *

Hamilton accompanied Hildegarde on her way home as far as she would allow him—the last day's journey she chose to be alone, and at Ingolstadt they parted. For two years? Or for ever?

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

THERE may be some, there may be many of my readers, who would think that Hamilton had been a "confounded fool," were they to hear, that at the appointed time, he braved the threats, resisted all the bribes of his uncle, remitted his five thousand pounds to Munich, and returned to Bavaria, with the intention there to live and die, "the world (viz. London) forgetting, by the world forgot." We do not wish him to fall in the opinion of any one, and therefore, request all persons disposed to entertain such an opinion of him, under such circumstances to close this book, and imagine he acted as they would have done

in his place. Often have vows as solemn as his been broken, and for the same mercenary motives which might have tempted him ; and if the world have not applauded, it has at least not censured such derelictions in a manner to deter others from practising them.

Suppose him, then, reader, (not gentle reader, for such would never consent to the supposition,) suppose him at the end of two years a man of the world, or a worldly man, whichever you please, Hildegard not exactly forgotten, but remembered only as a "beautiful girl with whom he had been at one time so much in love as to have entertained the absurd idea of rustivating with her on a couple of hundred pounds per annum in the Bavarian Highlands !" Suppose him attached to some embassy, young, handsome, and rich, the chosen partner of all still dancing princesses ! Or suppose we put an end to Uncle Jack at once, and allow Hamilton, without further delay, to inherit a fortune which would give him a position in the London and Yorkshire world ; if you wish it, we can double his income too—in books, fifty or sixty thousand a year is quite a common thing, and as to old uncles, they are only mentioned in

order that they may die, just when their fortune is necessary to the happiness or comfort of younger and more interesting persons. Suppose—— Suppose—— Suppose you close the book, as before recommended, for nothing of this kind occurred. Uncle Jack (who in his youth had taken a trip to Gretna Green,) might have pardoned his nephew's "loving not wisely but too well," but he neither would do so, nor would he die, and so Hamilton, after having listened to his father's reproaches and expostulations, endured his brother's sneers, and steadily set at defiance his uncle's anger, returned to Munich and claimed his bride, of whose coldness or want of enthusiasm, he was never after heard to complain.

Felsenbauer's little property was purchased, and Hans, after having officiated as Hamilton's "gentleman" for two years in England, returned to his primitive occupation of directing the plough—not quite, indeed, with the satisfaction of a Cincinnatus, for years elapsed before he ceased to regret his fallen greatness, or to expatiate to his few ignorant fellow-servants on the splendours of his master's home.

Hamilton resigned himself more cheerfully

than his servant to his change of fortune; he never spoke of home, with which his communication became very indirect and uncertain from the time his sister had married and gone to reside in the north of Scotland. His brother John seldom wrote, his father and uncle never; he made no effort to conciliate the latter, not even taking advantage of the occasions which presented themselves at a later period of requesting him to become a godfather to a little Jack or a little Joan. He became a good farmer, a keen sportsman, and so celebrated a rifle shot, that he was feared as competitor at all the *Scheiben-Schiessen* in the neighbourhood. He generally wore a mountaineer's dress—perhaps because it was comfortable, perhaps, also, because it was becoming; and in the course of a few years, his family would scarcely have recognized him in the vigorous sunburnt man, whose very features were changed in expression by his altered mode of life—energy and strength had taken the place of ease and gracefulness. A. Z. pronounced the change advantageous, and often said it would have been difficult to have found a more picturesquely bandit-looking figure than his; when, on a return from a hunt, he sprang along the rocky path leading to his moun-

tain home, his slouched hat shading the upper, as much as his long moustache the lower, part of his face.

As to Hildegarde, the calm, contented tenor of her life preserved her beauty in so remarkable a manner, that Hamilton seriously believed she grew handsomer every year; they and the Z's almost lived together, no summer heat, or winter storm kept them asunder: their Alpine parties, and sledging expeditions to the neighbouring balls, were made together, and many a little adventure is still remembered by both families, with a mixture of amusement and regret—regret that those times are past—gone—never to return again.

At the end of eight years Uncle Jack unsolicited, relented, and Hamilton was recalled. Can it be believed that for some days he hesitated to obey the mandate? that Hildegarde wept bitterly for the first time since her marriage? But so it was. The offers which ten years before would have filled their hearts with gratitude and joy, were now accepted as a sacrifice made to the future prospects of their children. A. Z. to the last insisted that she would be the greatest sufferer of all, “in you,” she said, turning to Hildegarde,

"I lose the most patient and intelligent of listeners; in your husband, the most attentive of friends; eight years intimate intercourse, such as ours has been, has made you both so completely a part of our family, that knowing how much we shall miss you, Hermann and I have at length come to the long protracted desperate resolution of leaving Hohenfels; we ought to have done so long ago, on account of the education of our children."

"Oh, no, don't leave Hohenfels, we shall be sure to return here next year—every summer!" cried Hamilton and Hildegarde, almost together.

But they have not returned, nor are they likely to do so. The revolution which commenced in Germany, in the year 1848, is still in progress; to foretell how, or when it will end, would be difficult; this much is, however, certain, that Bavaria is not likely to be soon again (if ever,) as tranquil and happy as when these pages were first written: *then* the most intelligent peasant would have refused to leave his waltz, his pot of beer, or his joyous *jödel*, for the sake of any newspaper that ever was printed, or even to hear a political discussion between the schoolmaster and the parish priest!

Great is the change which has taken place in this respect; without any law to control the liberty of the press, newspapers of the worst tendency now circulate in all directions, and the peasant reads, thinks, and talks more of politics than of his crops, and naturally feels inclined to adopt opinions calculated to elevate him in his own estimation, and draw those down to his level, whom he had formerly considered far above him. In order to appreciate the importance of this change, my countrymen must remember that in Germany, the peasantry is the army.

Hohenfels is sold. Baron Z. found the brewery more expensive than profitable, when his visits of inspection were limited to an occasional week or ten days. He is half inclined to purchase Hamilton's house, which still remains, shut up and uninhabited; presenting, as A. Z. observed in her last letter, the perfect picture of a deserted house, with all its "garden flowers growing wild."

* * * * *

"After all, Hildegarde," said Hamilton, one morning, as they looked out of the breakfast room window into his uncle's handsome domain, "after all, if we could conjure a few of your

mountains, with some chamois upon them here, I believe I could again prefer England to Germany—that is, in my present position—a poor man really can enjoy life in Germany—it is only a rich one who could do so in England!”

THE END.

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